

GENERATION OF COMBAT POWER BY INSURGENTS:  
AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE  
Art of War

by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

GENERATION OF COMBAT POWER BY INSURGENTS: AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS, by MAJ Michel Dinesman, 115 pages.

Is there commonality in how insurgent and counterinsurgent forces develop combat power? Elements of Combat Power remain an essential element of operational doctrine through the USADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*. If Elements of Combat Power are essential to a military force, then it may be that they are equally important to insurgent forces. Case studies from the insurgency in Dhofar and Post-911 Afghanistan are used to conduct an analysis to determine if insurgent forces develop combat power in a similar manner as the U.S. Army. The analysis demonstrates that insurgents generate combat power in ways that do not violate the principles outlined in USADRP 3-0. The analysis also demonstrates that counterinsurgent forces may conduct a Center of Gravity Analysis using the insurgent military force as the CoG and the Elements of Combat Power as the Critical Capabilities.

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Lastly, the author thanks his wife without whose support none of this would have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS .....	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Research Question .....	2
Study Methodology and Research Design.....	3
CHAPTER 2 THE ELEMENTS OF COMBAT POWER .....	6
Leadership.....	7
Information .....	7
Warfighting Functions .....	8
Movement and Maneuver .....	8
Intelligence.....	8
Fires.....	9
Sustainment.....	10
Protection .....	10
Summary .....	11
CHAPTER 3 DHOFAR (1962-1976).....	13
Dhofar Rebellion.....	14
Overview of the Campaign and Region.....	14
Leadership.....	17
Information .....	22
Movement and Maneuver .....	25
Intelligence.....	28
Fires .....	33
Sustainment.....	36
Protection.....	38
Conclusions.....	41

CHAPTER 4 AFGHANISTAN (2001-PRESENT) .....	45
Overview of the Campaign and Region.....	46
Leadership.....	48
Information .....	52
Movement and Maneuver .....	54
Intelligence.....	57
Fires .....	59
Sustainment.....	61
Protection .....	63
Review .....	65
Leadership.....	65
Information .....	65
Movement and Maneuver .....	66
Intelligence.....	66
Fires.....	67
Sustainment.....	67
Protection .....	67
Conclusion .....	67
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	71
Conclusions.....	71
Leadership.....	72
Information .....	73
Movement and Maneuver .....	74
Intelligence.....	74
Fires.....	75
Sustainment.....	76
Protection .....	77
Combat Power.....	77
Recommendations.....	78
Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment .....	78
Leadership.....	80
Movement and Maneuver .....	80
Sustainment.....	82
Elements of Combat Power Implemented in Shaping and Decisive Operations .....	83
The Population as a Critical Requirement .....	83
Elements of Insurgent Combat Power .....	84
Asymmetric Warfare.....	84
GLOSSARY .....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	95

## ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Review
AO	Area of Operations
BN	Battalion
COG	Center of Gravity
CMD	Command–1
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IPB	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
MILDEC	Military Deception
OBJ	Objective
OE	Operational Environment
OP	Observation Post



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Figure 1. Elements of Combat Power .....	6
Figure 2. Oman (Shaded Relief).....	14
Figure 3. U.S.-Afghan War (2001-present).....	46
Figure 4. Elements of Combat Power as Critical Capabilities in a Center of Gravity Analysis .....	79

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

If counterinsurgent forces can describe, understand, and visualize, in their own doctrine, how they generate combat power, they may be able to use that same doctrine to analyze insurgent organizations and how the insurgents develop combat power. As a concept, there is value in understanding how insurgents develop their combat power because it may assist counterinsurgent forces overcome their trepidation and lack of understanding of insurgency.

When military forces enter into a conflict, part of their preparation requires a study of their enemy and how that enemy functions. The process is variably called Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield, Battlespace, or the Operational Environment (for the purpose of this project the acronym IPB is used). Conducting the IPB is the responsibility of the intelligence section of the relevant unit. That being said, there may not be sufficient information available to analyze the insurgent group and its actions. In such a situation, the counterinsurgent force must accept the task of collecting information from any available sources to enable its intelligence section to conduct analysis over time, in order to generate the IPB products required to properly exploit the processes the U.S. Army has developed to conduct planning.

Therein lies a problem. In order to follow U.S. Army doctrine and execute decisive operations against an enemy in order to end a conflict as soon as possible, detailed information on the enemy must be available ideally within a timely fashion. But in many counterinsurgency operations that information is not available and military forces must start operating before they are fully ready. The lack of information about the

insurgents can cause uncertainty for a commander and the staff: it also creates an increased risk of failure. Furthermore, in such circumstances measures to mitigate that risk may not be clearly identifiable to the commander and the staff. This is where the IPB fits in. An accurate IPB can help mitigate risk by identifying the enemy's means of generating combat power. If this is accurately done the commander and staff can more easily relate to the information available and thus better plan and execute decisive operations. When good information is scarce, however, incorrect assumptions are often made about the enemy.

It is of prime importance for counterinsurgent forces to avoid the expectation that insurgents generate combat power in the exact same way as the counterinsurgents. Insurgents may observe the same principles but use different techniques. Understanding this important point should enable a better understanding of the enemy, one that can be conveyed through the IPB. Failing to see this can lead to faulty analysis and a misunderstanding of the insurgent group and its capabilities.

In order to validate this idea, a study will be conducted to determine if there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents generate combat power. Such a study is required in order to ensure that principles apply equally to insurgents and counterinsurgents.<sup>1</sup>

### Research Question

This research project seeks to answer the following question: is there commonality in how insurgent and counterinsurgent forces develop combat power?

In order to answer this it is necessary to define the terms that are used in this thesis. U.S. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (ADRP 3-0) states

Combined arms maneuver and wide area security, executed through simultaneous offensive, defensive, stability, or defense support of civil authorities tasks, require continuously generating and applying combat power, often for extended periods. Combat power is the total means of destructive, constructive, and information capabilities that a military unit or formation can apply at a given time. Army forces generate combat power by converting potential into effective action.<sup>2</sup>

The Elements of Combat Power used to conduct this research are: Leadership; Information; Movement and Maneuver; Intelligence; Fires; Sustainment; and Protection.<sup>3</sup> In a review of the materials available to conduct this research, almost no information of value was noted on how insurgents conduct mission planning. As such, the Mission Command Element of Combat Power is not included in the research and analysis. This should be considered a limitation but not one that will impact the results of the analysis.

### Study Methodology and Research Design

The methodology for this research study is set out in chapter 2, along with a review of the Elements of Combat Power as set out in ADRP 3-0. This is to develop a common understanding by which the case studies will be measured. As this research study focuses on the use of U.S. Army doctrine a broader literature review has little utility. Chapter 3 contains a case study of the Dhofar Rebellion. This was selected because of the variety of sources available that contained the detail required to analyze the Elements of Combat Power of the insurgent group, the People's Front for the Liberation of the Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), the communist insurgent group that fought against the Government of Oman. Additionally, an in-depth study of the

Dhofar Rebellion was conducted by the author as part of his studies in the Art of War (Scholar's) Program at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff Officer's Course. This provided not only a review of texts but also of primary sources, including interviews with General Tony Jeapes and Paul Sibley, both former members of the British Army's Special Air Service (SAS) and veterans of the British operations in Dhofar. Chapter 4 contains a case study of the current insurgency in Afghanistan. This too was selected because of the variety of detailed sources available, and due to the author's exposure to it during his year at CGSOC. Finally, conclusions and recommendations follow in chapter 5.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The introduction is extrapolated from a conversation between the author and Colonel David Maxwell, USA (ret), Associate Director, Security Studies Program Georgetown University . . . but mostly from COL Maxwell.

<sup>2</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 16 May 2012), 3-2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>In any thesis study, there must be a limit on the size and scope of the research one conducts. This specific project is no exception. Over 170 pages were written in generating this thesis. Because time, space, and especially the attention span of the reader are primary considerations, only two case studies were selected: the Dhofar Rebellion and the US war in Afghanistan. Other case studies which were considered include: the Malayan Emergency, The Algerian War, the Mau Mau Uprising, the Rhodesian Insurgency, Soviet-Afghan War, and the Iraqi Insurgency. A major factor on the selection of Dhofar and Afghanistan were/are the prevalence of researchable materials that support the study of how insurgents generate and implement combat power. One of the most important limitations to recognize is that the case studies were viewed through the prism of a single point of view: that of the author. Choosing Iraq and Afghanistan risked ignoring possible cross-pollination between the two operations since sufficient evidence exists that insurgents shared information on how to construct improvised explosive devices. It is sufficient to close here by saying that no two insurgency campaigns are the same. Each insurgency is distinctly unique with its own genesis distinctly different from others. The contextual relationships between the two case studies used in this research project aided in conducting this research and reinforced what was discovered and learned.

It is understood that there are too many points of view to be considered in a single study of this kind, which compels the limits observed in writing this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ELEMENTS OF COMBAT POWER

To fully understand whether there is commonality regarding how insurgents and counterinsurgents generate combat power one must have a base of understanding of U.S. doctrine regarding this subject. Thus, the key elements are covered below. A more detailed reading of this, however, can be found in ADRP 3-0.<sup>1</sup> Additionally the key terms used throughout this research project are taken from the U.S. ADRP 1-02, Operational Terms and Military Symbols and are contained in the definitions of terms at the start of this thesis.

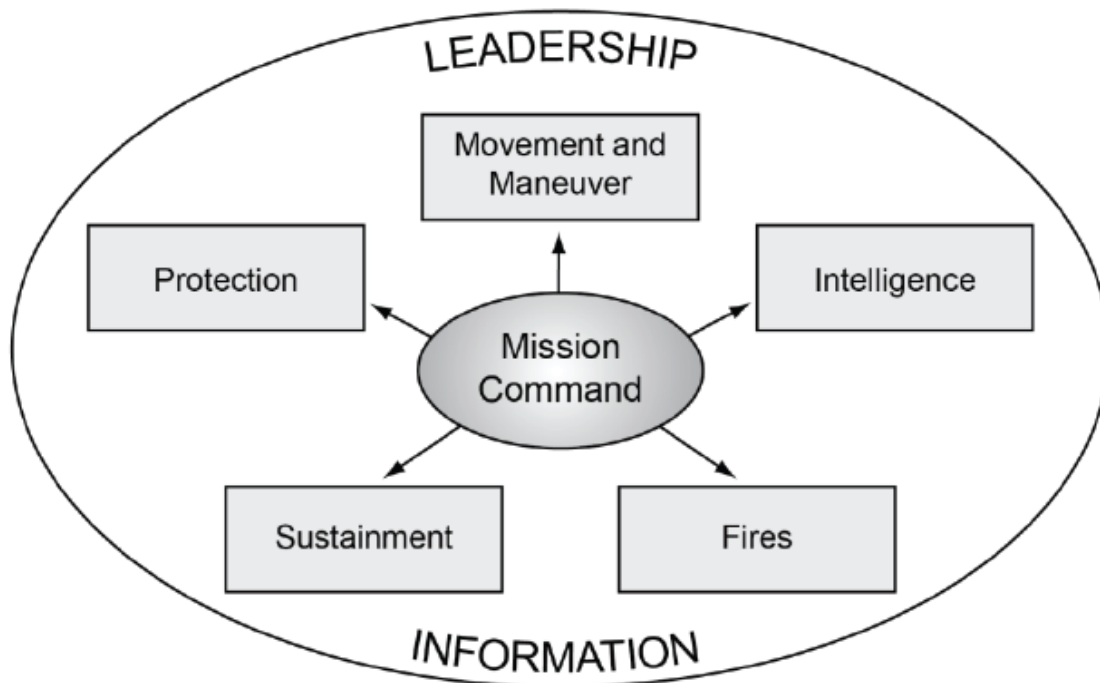


Figure 1. Elements of Combat Power

Source: US Army, Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 16 May 2012), 3-1.

Army manual ADRP 3-0, chapter 3, defines Combat Power as the total means of destructive, constructive, and information capabilities that a military unit or formation can apply at a given time. Army forces generate combat power by converting potential into effective action.<sup>2</sup> Eight elements make up Combat Power: Leadership, Information, Mission Command, Movement and Maneuver, Intelligence, Fires, Sustainment, and Protection.<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this research project Mission Command will be omitted as very little data exists on how insurgents conduct planning, staff coordination, and leader integration. Each of the rest of the above terms will be defined below to provide consistency when analyzing the cases contained in chapters 3 and 4.

### Leadership

The U.S. Army defines Leadership as: The process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.<sup>4</sup> Leadership unifies the elements of combat power.<sup>5</sup> Leadership is part of the dynamic environment of the Elements of Combat Power. Strong, adaptive, aggressive leadership that effectively implements the Tenets of Unified Land Operations<sup>6</sup> can make up for deficiencies in other Elements of Combat Power.

### Information

Information enables commanders at all levels to make informed decisions on how best to apply combat power. Ultimately, this creates opportunities to achieve definitive results. Knowledge management enables commanders to make informed, timely decisions despite the uncertainty of operations.<sup>7</sup> Information is not just the raw material of intelligence, but it is also a resource that can be used effectively, ineffectively, or even



ignored. When used and/or exploited effectively, information can act as a conduit to preempt or warn of enemy actions or operations, feeds the Intelligence Process, and can also prevent an enemy from distracting one's own forces and maintain mission focus. Information Operations can reinforce pre-existing narratives, create new narratives, or re-direct to older themes. The key to Information Operations is to develop them prior to execution of an operation and to launch it simultaneously to circumvent the Information Operation of the opposing force.

### Warfighting Functions

#### Movement and Maneuver

As an element of Combat Power, Movement and Maneuver is how a military force positions itself in time and space to create the conditions necessary to begin a decisive engagement and win. As individual doctrinal terms, movement and maneuver are closely related. One could view the difference between the two as: movement is getting from one place to another; maneuver is movement when in close proximity to an enemy force, or when in direct contact with that enemy.

#### Intelligence

The Army defines intelligence as the “product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations.”<sup>8</sup> This definition does not fully explain its dynamics. Intelligence analysts transform raw information into Intelligence using their education (institutional and personal), experience, and intuition. Intelligence is a driving factor in

the operations process. When the commander determines there is insufficient intelligence to drive an operation, the only other option is to conduct intelligence operations (reconnaissance or surveillance) to generate intelligence. The targeting process, Find, Fix, Action, Exploit, Analyze, Disseminate (F2AEAD) can also drive operations using aggressive, proactive actions in the Exploit phase.

### Fires

Fires is defined by the Army as, “the use of weapons systems to create a specific lethal or nonlethal effect on a target.”<sup>9</sup> Fires, direct and indirect, should always be integrated with Movement and Maneuver to create a synergy of effects upon an opposing force. If a defending force receives a coordinated barrage of offensive direct and indirect fires while the offensive maneuver force moves into its assault position and places direct fires on it as well, a deadly combination of effects becomes difficult to overcome.<sup>10</sup>

A key part of Fires for consideration are nonlethal fires. Information and nonlethal Fires work together to build synergistic effects over time. This can be called a narrative.

Perception can have greater impact than objective facts. If a military force closely aligns their narrative (combination of nonlethal fires and information) and actions (operations driven by well developed and refined intelligence), the result can be momentum beyond the operational environment of the battlefield. The creation of a perception of success within a population where a given force enjoys operational success can also generate a perception of success at the strategic and national levels.<sup>11</sup> When a military force closely integrates its narrative with its operations, there is a synergistic impact at echelons above the tactical and operational level. This is because there is not

only an appearance of success via information systems and sources, there is actual success on the ground which can become irrefutable by an opposing force's narrative or an uninformed or biased media/press. Nonlethal fires can have as great an impact as lethal fires, and sometimes greater.

### Sustainment

According to ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, sustainment “is the related tasks and systems that provide support and services to ensure freedom of action, to extended operational reach, and to prolong endurance.”<sup>12</sup> Sustainment determines the endurance, depth, and duration of Army operations.<sup>13</sup> Sustainment ensures commanders have the tools necessary to conduct operations. Sometimes logistics operations (part of Sustainment) are the decisive operation for an insurgent group.

### Protection

Protection encompasses the related tasks and systems that preserve the force so the commander can apply maximum combat power to accomplish the mission.<sup>14</sup> Preserving the force includes protecting personnel (combatants and noncombatants) and physical assets of the United States and multinational military and civilian partners, to include the host nation.<sup>15</sup> Protection of the force encompasses defensive actions that are passive as well as active. An example of passive protection measures are actions an insurgent takes to blend in with the population so as to be invisible to counterinsurgent forces that are not native to the area. An example of active protection measures are actions an insurgent takes to employ signals or early warning of counterinsurgent forces in their vicinity.

## Summary

Combat power consists of the required elements to conduct combat operations. Not all Elements of Combat Power are required for each and every type of operation or mission, but some are always required. Some of the Elements of Combat Power are intangibles and can only be measured subjectively, such as Leadership. Other elements such as Sustainment or Fires can more objectively be measured. The Elements of Combat Power are dynamic in that leaders, through the art of leadership and the science of applying the Warfighting Functions, can balance how they plan, coordinate, and execute combat missions depending upon which Elements of Combat Power they are best suited to employ along with setting the proper conditions for execution.

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<sup>1</sup>See [http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/ADRP\\_1.html](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/ADRP_1.html). As the U.S. Army continually embraces change, readers may be required to do a search to find the publication should the link no longer open to the desired location.

<sup>2</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, 3-1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, *Operational Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 August 2012), 1-23.

<sup>5</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 10 September 2012), 1-1.

<sup>6</sup>Tenets of Unified Land Operations: Army operations are characterized by flexibility, integration, lethality, adaptability, depth, and synchronization. See US Army, Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 7.

<sup>7</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, 3-2.

<sup>8</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-21.

<sup>9</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-09, *Fires* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 August 2012), 1-1.

<sup>10</sup>From U.S. Army, Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 4 July 2001), 3-42, para 3-145. As the attacking force moves forward, preparatory fires sequentially neutralize, suppress, or destroy enemy positions. The commander must weigh its probable effects against achieving a greater degree of surprise against the enemy, especially under conditions of limited visibility, in determining whether to fire an artillery preparation. He may decide to employ smart or brilliant munitions to destroy select high-payoff targets or use these munitions in mass against part of the enemy defense to facilitate a breach and negate the requirement for long-duration preparation fires using conventional munitions. The number of examples in history are innumerable [*sic*]. Some examples: On D-Day, naval and aerial bombardment softened the German defenses; prior to the Incheon landings, the preparatory bombardment had great impact upon the North Korean defenders.

<sup>11</sup>See Scott Mann, “The Shaping Coalition Forces’ Strategic Narrative in Support of Village Stability Operations,” *Small Wars Journal* (31 March 2011); Neil Smith and Colonel Sean MacFarland, “Anbar Awakens: The Tipping Point,” *Military Review* (2008): 41-54.

<sup>12</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 July 2012), 1-1.

<sup>13</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0, 3-4.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-5.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 3

### DHOFAR (1962-1976)

The Dhofar Rebellion in South Arabia, from 1962 to 1976, was an important conflict because, for the time, communist insurgencies were victorious in Yemen and Viet Nam. With the U.S. and Western Europe vs. the Soviet Union in the Cold War, public sentiment was not in favor of more protracted counterinsurgency. And yet, the British Army, using its elite Special Air Service (SAS) and seconded officers,<sup>1</sup> helped the Sultanate of Oman's Armed Forces (SAF) successfully fight the Dhofar Rebellion and, for the most part, under the radar of the news media and the population of the UK. Because many of the people involved in the successful counterinsurgency published their experiences with great detail, it has been chosen as the first of two studies to determine if there are commonalities in how insurgent military forces generate combat power when compared with counterinsurgent forces. Additionally, the author's study of the Dhofar Rebellion included interviews with many SAS Officers and NCOs who took part in the campaign. This chapter will provide an overview of the campaign, before analyzing the actions of the military arm of the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG—the Communist insurgent group that fought against the Government of Oman). This will be done using the U.S. Army's current doctrinal definition of Elements of Combat Power as a base of comparison. The focus of this chapter is to understand how the *adoo*,<sup>2</sup> the military force of the PFLOAG, generated its combat power.

## Dhofar Rebellion

### Overview of the Campaign and Region

Dhofar is a mountainous region in south western Oman that is primarily populated by a minority ethnically Arab group.<sup>3</sup> It is sparsely populated by subsistence farmers and herders who compete for water resources. Because Dhofar has very rugged terrain, the Government of Oman had very little presence in the Dhofar region except for the major towns that populated the coast.



Figure 2. Oman (Shaded Relief)

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Oman (Shaded Relief) 1996, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/oman\\_rel96.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/oman_rel96.jpg) (accessed 19 November 2012).

Said bin Taimur, the Sultan of Oman, assumed power in the 1930's and ruled his poor and under-developed country without much attention to the modern world.<sup>4</sup> One of the reasons for the rebellion was this lack of governmental response to the extreme poverty of the people of Dhofar. Other reasons include the discovery of petroleum reserves in the east of Oman and a communist takeover of Yemen on Oman's western border. Even though the commerce of petroleum created a source new revenue for the Sultan's treasury, he did nothing to improve the lot of his people. He felt it would corrupt the Omanis as the oil revenue was doing to the rest of the Arabian Peninsula.

Another reason for the revolt was the intent of China and the Soviet Union to control the flow of petroleum through the Gulf of Oman and the Gulf of Aden as it flowed towards the Suez Canal. If the freedom of navigation of petroleum could be controlled to restrict delivery to the West, the Soviets and China would appreciate a considerable victory. It is for this reason that much of the support to the rebellion came from the Soviet Union and China and through the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY).

On 23 July, 1970 the ruler of Oman, Said bin Taimur, was overthrown by his son, Qaboos, who was more progressive and focused on improvements and infrastructure for the people of Oman.<sup>5</sup> By the time Qaboos ousted his father, the entire mountainous region of Dhofar, the *jebel*,<sup>6</sup> was controlled by PFLOAG and the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF). Qaboos set in motion plans to improve life in Oman through civil projects and the building of infrastructure. As the projects began to develop into improved quality of life some members of the DLF decided to demobilized in response. The PFLOAG's reaction



sought to take over the DLF and demobilize it in order to take total control of the rebellion.<sup>7</sup>

The PFLOAG was a communist insurgent group supported by China and the USSR via their trusted agents in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). Through the PDRY, PFLOAG recruited and indoctrinated Dhofari children and military aged males with the goal of a communist takeover of Oman.

That was the stage set for the British SAS as they came to support Qaboos in retaking Dhofar. The SAS sent over complete squadrons and set them up as British Army Training Teams (BATTs), which made their support to civil authorities and counterinsurgency operations practically invisible.<sup>8</sup> For the SAS, their operation in Oman was technically listed as a training mission and few people understood the exact nature of the support provided to the Government of Oman (GoO). Few people in Great Britain were interested in fighting communist insurgencies after the French experience in Indochina and Algeria and the follow-on U.S. experience in Viet Nam. For more than 14 years the SAS and British military officers seconded to the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) fought alongside local Dhofar tribesman (the *firqas* or, *firqat*) and defeated the insurgency.

Major General Anthony Jeapes' commanded a SAS squadron in 1971 and returned as the regimental commander in 1976. He later wrote a book about his experiences in the Dhofar campaign, *SAS Operation Oman*, which provides the core information for this chapter. His narrative was written from the point of view of a soldier explaining his observations and using his military education and experience to explain his observations. Also, as a senior officer and commander, Jeapes had access to completed

reports of SAS activities. While some authors who wrote about the rebellion wrote about their tactical-level experience, Jeapes' unique experience provides a tactical, operational, and strategic viewpoint. Jeapes walked many patrols as a patrol member observing junior SAS officers as they directed operations, planned the strategic-level operations as the SAS commander, and most everything in between. This makes his observations unique and very useful to answer the question of this research project.

### Leadership

Jeapes described his first encounter with a former *adoo* leader who rejected the PFLOAG and joined forces with the SAS. The former *adoo* was named Salim Mubarack and would eventually lead the first *firqa* unit. Jeapes saw leadership qualities in Salim and determined to form a *firqa* unit around him. He saw in Salim a man who could influence his fellow Dhofaris, lead them, direct them in combat against the *adoo*, and return victorious.

He had been the second-in-command of the entire Eastern Area, he explained, and as such knew it like the palm of his hand, but he had a good working knowledge too of the Central and Western Areas and could lead a *firqat* right across the *jebel*. Yes, he could raise a *firqat* he said, if I could provide the weapons and training for his men in modern tactics and new weapons. He spoke with a confidence and purpose as he unfolded his ideas.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage, Jeapes rapidly sized up Salim. Salim was confident, had demonstrated his competence over time on the *jebel*, and did not hesitate in his promise to form a *firqat* and work with the SAS. Salim, as second-in-command of the Eastern Area, was trained by the Chinese to be a leader, led *adoo* in combat, planned operations, and knew how to generate a military force and build combat power. His development of the first *firqa* unit proved it.

Jeapes provides more examples of *adoo* leadership's ability to influence, direct and motivate. In the excerpt below, SAS troopers went on a patrol with soldiers from the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF). They made contact with the *adoo* by chance and developed the situation. One of the SAS troopers named Glennie carried a machine-gun for the very first time and a SAF patrol.<sup>10</sup> The first burst that Glennie fired caused the SAF to gasp in admiration of the firepower they had on their side, and the *adoo* to cease fire as they tried to figure out what the sound was. As neither the SAF nor the *adoo* had ever been close to a real machine-gun, the dynamics of the contact and engagement changed in favor of the SAF. As Glennie laid down suppressive fire, some *adoo* attempted to maneuver against the SAF patrol.

A group of four or five men began to skirmish up a shallow wadi towards Glennie, moving up in short dashes from rock to rock whilst a light machine-gunner to a flank kept the SAF heads down. Glennie waited until he saw a man skip behind a small rock then opened up on him, chopping the rock to pieces and killing the man behind it. Another *adoo* tried to move forward and Glennie cut him down as well. Then, as he was aiming at a third, a shattering shock numbed his arm.<sup>11</sup>

A chance contact is when opposing military forces encounter each other by accident and attempt to achieve a position of advantage, one over the other. The objective is to lay down a superior base of fire and maneuver against the other to either destroy the opponent or cause them to withdraw. The *adoo*, despite the SAF and SAS patrol's superior firepower, decided to continue their maneuver against their enemy, despite the danger to their forces. Using the Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power, they identified the SAF perimeter, and attacked towards the machine-gun, disabling it and injuring the SAS trooper. Despite having inferior firepower, the *adoo* patrol leader motivated his soldiers to attack their enemy. The leader also directed their maneuver

which effectively engaged the SAS machine-gunner and disabled him. That qualified as effective and competent leadership: The process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.<sup>12</sup> Through direction by their leader, the *adoo* also properly conducted fire and maneuver (excellent implementation of the Fires Element of Combat Power and Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power) to get close enough to the SAS machine-gunner, then placed effective fires on him, wounded him, and disabled the weapon system.

In one sector, the *adoo* used an artillery piece to shoot into the town of Taqa, threatening the population to demonstrate that the GoO could not protect them as well as to harass the SAF and SAS. In response, the Jeapes assembled a battalion-sized element of SAF, *firqa*, and SAS troopers to move onto the jebel, find the artillery piece, and destroy it. While searching for the artillery piece, they came under fire from the *adoo*. The patrol sought cover, built sangers for protection, and prepared for the follow-on movement into the valley in search of the artillery piece. All the *adoo* in the valley were aware of the presence of the SAF/*firqat*/SAS and came to repel the invaders.

The *adoo* fought fiercely and for some minutes intense machine-gun and mortar fire was directed at nobody in particular in an apparent waste of ammunition. Only later did we realise (sic) that this was probably to cover the withdrawal of the big gun.<sup>13</sup>

Jeapes concludes that the intense direct and indirect fires were used to fix the SAF/*firqat*/SAS force and prevent them from maneuvering and cover the *adoo* withdrawal of the artillery piece. This seems reasonable in light of the fact that close to Jeapes defensive position one of his patrols discovered the artillery piece's firing position, including its ammunition. That being the case, it makes sense that the gun had to

be close by as the *adoo* moved it by hand into firing position. The *adoo* leader made decisions which compensated for lack of sufficient movement and maneuver forces to protect the gun and expended munitions to cover its withdrawal. The *adoo* used leadership to compensate for deficiencies in other elements of combat power.

This quote from Jeapes' narrative picks up after the patrol finds the artillery piece's firing position.

Meanwhile, a BATT and *firqat* patrol had gone in the other direction towards the escarpment, where they came across the firing position of the gun and a small stockpile of shells. It was easy to see why it had been impossible to spot the firing position from Taqa. The gun had been cleverly sited on a flat area between two large rocks and roofed over with bushes for camouflage. Only the muzzle could be seen from Taqa and the backblast would be masked by the rocks and bushes. There was no sign of an artillery piece. The shells were all of Chinese manufacture for a 75 mm recoilless gun.<sup>14</sup>

This is significant. As the *firqat* and SAS approached the artillery piece's locations, the *adoo* leader could have withdrawn his forces and abandoned the gun and chosen not to fight. Instead, he demonstrated discipline and capable tactical leadership. Through a disciplined approach to leadership and focus on preparedness, he ensured his troops were well disciplined as well. He devoted some thought process to determine why the GoO was in his area, had confidence in his assessment, and made a decision and stuck to it. His actions showed some mental agility in determining possible GoO courses of action, sound judgment in making a rapid decision to move the gun, and created an innovative plan to protect the gun, his personnel, and himself. Moving a full size artillery piece by hand is not an easy task. Normally trucks, heavy-lift helicopters, or special transportation equipment are used to accomplish the same task. Over the terrain on the *jebel*, moving the gun was an impressive piece of leadership and action.

While continuing the battalion-level operation in search of the artillery piece, the entire unit becomes pinned down by *adoo* fire. Jeapes discussed possible *adoo* courses of action with Dherdhir. As a former *adoo* leader, Dherdhir was someone Jeapes depended upon to understand how the *adoo* thought, fought, and reacted.

I asked him what he thought the *adoo* would do next. He explained that they were just containing us with these little sniping attacks at present and identifying the flanks of the position, but that night would see a major attack up the spur we were now looking down. The *adoo firqat* from Wadi Ethon would join up with the *adoo* from the Wadi Darbat, who were known to be a particularly strong unit, and they would come up the spur to try to take out a couple of SAF sangars.<sup>15</sup>

Dherdhir provided his assessment of the situation. As a former *adoo* leader, his situational awareness was different than that of SAF or SAS personnel. He learned to read terrain as the other *adoo* did. He was trained in the same type of maneuver warfare as the other *adoo*. He understood how the *adoo* exploited time, space, and initiative. Mentally, Dherdhir put himself in command of the *adoo* and determined what course of action he would take by reading the terrain, using his experience, and sizing up the situation. The *adoo* were sniping at them to fix<sup>16</sup> them; to identify the size and boundary of the hasty defense that was created by the SAF, *firqat*, and SAS; and to keep them relatively comfortable by not applying too much pressure, but just enough to buy time to alert other *adoo* forces to join in a bigger hasty attack. With the given mission, disposition of the GoO forces, terrain, weather and light conditions, *adoo* troops available, and time, the *adoo* leader likely had few other options to carry out his attack other than the one outlined by Dherdhir. The *adoo* leader organized his forces, collected information to understand his enemy, visualized courses of action, described his intent, and prepared for an attack. He was generating combat power.

## Information

Salim Mubarak was the *adoo* leader mentioned in the Leadership section of this chapter. He was second-in-command of the Eastern Area of the *jebel*. In a continuation of his initial conversation with Jeapes, he discussed ideas for information operations against the *adoo*:

I was naively surprised and impressed by the speed with which he understood the reasoning behind information services, not yet knowing that in the coming months I was to learn more from him than I could teach. He wanted maximum publicity, he said, once the *firqat* was formed. He would design me a badge for use on all Government leaflets and stressed the need for his *firqat* members to be allowed to talk on Radio Dhofar. Nothing would impress the *adoo* more than hearing the voices of their former comrades urging them to join them.<sup>17</sup>

Clearly, Salim demonstrated great situational awareness and understanding about how to use information operations against his former compatriots. As a newly turned *adoo*, Salim had a near complete understanding of the audience and knew what messages would be most effective. Salim demonstrated an immediate command of inform and influence activities and how to utilize them to maximum effect.

An excellent example of the use of information can be seen when Jeapes and Salim prepared to seize the village of Sudh (modern-day Sadhh), from the *adoo*. They planned and executed an attack to destroy *adoo* personnel, liberate the town, and establish a foothold by the GoO military forces.

The *firqat* unit, reinforced by the SAS, entered Sudh uncontested. No *adoo* were present and any *adoo* agents or informers made no moves against them. The *firqat*, under Salim's direction, raised the GoO flag over the village and spoke to the town while all the residents remained in their houses. Salim informed the townspeople that they no longer were under the control of the *adoo* and that the Firqat Salahadin, under order of Sultan

Qaboos, were re-establishing governmental control. He informed all males in the town that they would be required to form in the town center at 10 o'clock. At the appointed time the *firqat* rounded up all the males in Sudh and Salim spoke to them. Jeapes observed from afar and watches as the mood of the men changed from stiffness to one of relaxation as the men asked questions of Salim. The rest of the day was spent by the *firqat* visiting each home in Sudh, meeting the people, and answering their questions.<sup>18</sup>

Jeapes writes, "By the evening of that day the town was spiritually ours as well as physically. I realized that what I had witnessed was a Communist take-over in reverse. Salim had used the methods he had been taught in China. It was a perfectly executed example of indoctrination such as no SAF or British troops could possibly have achieved."<sup>19</sup>

Using excellent judgment, and without the use of force, Salim turned the entire town. He used inform and influence operations to change the allegiance of Sudh. The decision by the town to support the GoO afterwards likely negatively impacted the *adool* including preventing them from using it as a safe haven and a source of information and intelligence. While it is true that Salim was the leader of a *firqat* and working for the GoO, readers should note that the skills and understanding that Salim used were not learned while he worked with the SAS. Sudh was seized on 23 February, 1971, a very short time after Salim changed sides. Despite the fact that he had GoO resources, support from the SAS, it was Salim who convinced the town to change allegiance. As Jeapes pointed out, the implementation of training Salim learned in China was what turned the village and something that neither the SAF nor the SAS could have accomplished.



Paul Sibley served with Jeapes and eventually did five tours in Dhofar: four tours as a non-commissioned officer (NCO) in the SAS and one tour as a tactical commander in the SAF. His published biography, *A Monk in the SAS*, provides some anecdotes as well as some overall assessments of the *adoo*. His operational experience provides a more tactical observation of the *adoo*'s use of the elements of combat power. Sibley described how, while searching for caches of weapons and ammunition, they observed *adoo* moving around in the area. As his patrol moved around confiscating the weapons and ammunition, they observed the *adoo* every now and again, but were never engaged. Sibley's conclusion was that the villagers passed along the SAS's location and their activities to the *adoo* to protect them from being engaged. The *adoo* commander, armed with the information as to what the SAS were doing and where they were at, used the information and decided to avoid a confrontation. The *adoo* leader used information to maintain situational awareness and make decisions.

The above is typical of the *adoo*'s use of information. The *adoo* had informants in villages, towns, or in isolated areas where population was scarce. As the *adoo* had relatives all over the jebel, even in remote areas, anyone was a source of information about GoO movement or operations. In many cases, the absence of information can be valuable. The *adoo* could effectively conduct inform and influence operations (as opposed to conducting intelligence operations) with almost any local population in the Dhofar region through intimidation, or because the civilians were from the same tribe, the same family, or were their friends. The flow of information about GoO military activities enabled the *adoo* leaders to stay informed, make decisions in a timely manner, and reduce the uncertainties in *adoo* activities and operations.

Sergey Plekhanov wrote a biography about Sultan Qaboos. His perspective after interviewing the Sultan and many of the GoO military and government officials provides a perspective from the strategic level of the Omani government. Plekhanov serves to illustrate the same point from a different perspective. Plekhanov gained access to key leaders in the GoO, including Qaboos. From that experience he wrote *A Reformer on the Throne: Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said*. His commentary on *adoo* informs and influence operations serves to show the darker side of the *adoo*.

Everyone knew that among these indigo-tinted mountaineers were members of the armed units of the PFLOAG (People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf), which the soldiers called *ado* ('enemy' in Arabic).

They had supporters among the local people, who ferried provisions and medicines to the rebels. Government forces were powerless to stop them, since their support was limited. Even those who would have liked to help the government preferred to keep silent, afraid of reprisal from the insurrectionists, who had spies everywhere. From time to time special groups appeared in the mountain villages, sent by the leaders of the Front to wreck vengeance on the "traitors". Rumors of this 'revolutionary justice' spread through the whole of Dhofar, paralyzing potential backers of the Sultan.<sup>20</sup>

The above excerpt demonstrates that the *adoo* sometimes had to influence *jebelis* (people who lived on the *jebel*) through intimidation, threats, and demonstrations of violence and murder, that not everyone supported their cause because of familial or tribal associations. The *adoo* conducted non-lethal targeting of the population of the *jebel* by conducting lethal targeting of people they deemed traitors. The same is true in Afghanistan.

### Movement and Maneuver

Traveling by vehicle on roads and trails in the Dhofar area was dangerous because the *adoo* used mines to restrict freedom of movement. Jeapes mentioned this specifically

several times throughout his book. He wrote that traveling from Salalah to Taqa, a distance of 37 kilometers, could take half a day because of the prevalence of mines along the route. Using mines denied the GoO military forces the freedom of movement on established lines of communications. The *adoo* did not use vehicles, thus mining the roads was a very effective tactic to control the movement of GoO military forces. It allowed the *adoo* to exert control over the movement and maneuver element of combat power of their enemies, also called counter-mobility.<sup>21</sup> The *adoo* became experts at achieving positions of advantage over their enemies, the counterinsurgent forces of the GoO

In reference to the *adoo* engagement against the SAF and SAS patrol from the Leadership section above, the *adoo* maneuvered well in that meeting engagement.<sup>22</sup> As the *adoo* maneuvered towards the machine-gun, Jeapes described it as “moving up in short dashes from rock to rock whilst a light machine-gunner to a flank kept the SAF heads down”<sup>23</sup> The description of the *adoo* maneuver portrays a tactically sound military unit. They sought a position of advantage over the SAS machine gunner, and they achieved it. The SAS trooper was surprised that he had been hit by *adoo* small arms fire.

Despite that the Battle of Mirbat was likely the turning point in the war against the *adoo* because of their dramatic loss, the Battle of Mirbat (19 July 1972) is an excellent example of *adoo* Movement and Maneuver. The *adoo* formed a composite attack force of between 250-300 men to attack GoO military forces in the town of Mirbat on the Dhofar coast. They attacked the symbols of GoO power in the town: the old fort where about 30 Dhofar Gendarmes were housed as well as the SAS compound a short distance away.<sup>24</sup> The *adoo* demonstrated an ability to conduct complicated movement,

and then maneuver, in conjunction with direct and indirect fires, once the attack began. The *adoo* initially conducted movement to collect all their forces at an assembly point where they were briefed about the operation. Then, they moved to a release point undetected by GoO military forces. Next, the *adoo* conducted maneuver under the cover of direct and indirect fires. They definitely achieved a position of advantage over the GoO forces in Mirbat. They achieved surprise, shock, and momentum and effectively moved under cover of fires as they approached their objective.

Sibley, in his book noted the quality of the *adoo*'s field craft, stating:

When on the offensive, the *adoo* (enemy) were generally very hard to spot and their field-craft was of a very high order. They would often open fire at long range, whilst others carried out a flanking manoeuvre (sic) to close the range. They were lightly equipped and moved very fast. They were able to do this because they could break off a contact whenever they wanted and re-supply themselves from caches close at hand. . . . In 1975, when I was an officer in *Firqat* Force of the Sultan's Army, I was briefing the officers of the Desert Regiment about a forthcoming operation. One of them asked "How will we be able to tell the difference between the *adoo* and the *firqat*". I said "If you can see them, they are *firqat*. If you can't, they are *adoo*."<sup>25</sup>

This is significant for the use of cover and concealment is an integral part of conducting movement and maneuver.<sup>26</sup> Sibley spoke from a position of experience and years of observation of *adoo* capabilities.

Ian Gardiner was an officer in the Royal Marines seconded to the SAF, a pilot, and sometimes infantryman. In his book, *In the Service of the Sultan: A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency*, he validates the same observations as Sibley, that the *adoo* capably conduct Movement and Maneuver, specifically how to deploy, move, maneuver, and employ direct fires.

Angus Ramsay and a small escort set off to look at the head of a wadi running down to the north, while Charlie Daniel and Staff Sergeant Ali Salim looked at the south. Visibility was grey and patchy in the low cloud and half-light.

Angus found nothing in the north, but as he was returning to the ridgeline [*sic*], he heard a burst of firing from the south, where Charlie Daniel had encountered a group of about seven *adoo* at close quarters moving up the wadi towards him. This was just the sort of very close combat where the *adoo*'s light equipment, fast-firing assault weapons, initiative, and superb knowledge of the area gave them a marked advantage.<sup>27</sup>

Gardiner's comment reveals his general assessment of *adoo* capabilities, which are similar to those of Sibley. Below, Gardiner continued,

The enemy were often as surprised as we were. We stumbled across each other. But they were extremely good at seizing the initiative and had a wonderful eye for ground. Any mistake that you made in reading the ground or assessing their dispositions was instantly exploited and you could very quickly find that you and your patrol were in danger of being surrounded.<sup>28</sup>

Gardiner's observations above were that of an infantryman admiring the skill of his adversary. He describes the same kind of chance contact as Jeapes and notes that complacency on the part of the SAF provided a vulnerability that the *adoo* would quickly exploit through quick maneuver.

### Intelligence

Taqa is a town in the Dhofar on the coast, used by the Dhofaris for trade and supplies. Upon his arrival at Taqa, Jeapes, received a standard brief from his troopers. He reviewed the terrain, the living arrangements, the security situation, and the subject of intelligence. When Jeapes asked about the ability of his personnel to collect intelligence, he was told that the population did not feel comfortable enough to discuss the *adoo*. In 1972 the people of Taqa were not providing information on the *adoo*. They were either on the side of the *adoo* or were scared and intimidated by them. If the GoO military forces could not provide for the security of the population, the *adoo* quite obviously prevailed and the population would not support the government. Under those conditions,

the *adoo* intelligence operations functioned well enough to protect their activities in Taqa. The *adoo* received information to support their security and intelligence operations and control the population in their area of operations and denied the same to the GoO military forces.<sup>29</sup>

The Battle of Mirbat took place on 19 July, 1972. *Adoo* leaders planned the attack to take place during the monsoon season when fog and mist would blanket the valleys and the jebel, obscuring their movement. That the fog would restrict visibility of air assets was likely a consideration also. Prior to assembling for their attack, the *adoo* sent out a patrol elsewhere in the jebel to draw the vast majority of the SAF forces out of Mirbat, leaving it lightly protected vulnerable. The *adoo* moved to their assembly area using screening forces to ensure they did not make any chance contact with GoO military forces and lose their element of surprise. Once all the forces were at the assembly area, the objective was revealed and final preparations made. The *adoo* forces moved out, down the jebel, and into the plain in front of Mirbat. The *adoo* launched an assault on a hill between Mirbat and the jebel where the Dhofari Gendarmerie (DG) maintained a listening/observation post. They took over the hill and emplaced mortar on the slope to fire directly at their objective: the old fort that housed the DG and the SAS compound. The emplaced machine-guns, recoilless rockets, and mortars in positions to place direct and indirect fires on their objective. They moved their attack force forward and initiated their assault, using their fires to fix the DG and SAS. This allowed their assault force to move to an obstacle belt that protected Mirbat in order to form a penetration. The volume of *adoo* fires on the DG and the SAS effectively protected their approach and the situation looked dire for the DG at the fort and the SAS in their compound.

RAF pilots in Strikemaster aircraft came to the support of the Mirbat force despite the fog, mist, and weather conditions. They flew out to see and approached as low as possible over the ground and used guns to strafe the *adoo* trying to reduce the obstacle belt. At practically the same time, a replacement squadron of SAS was on a firing range at Salalah, about 74 kilometers away. The squadron reinforced the SAS troopers under attack and repelled the *adoo* who fled the battle and returned to the *jebel*.

The Battle of Mirbat was an example of how well the *adoo* conducted intelligence operations. The battle itself was lost, but only because of the great skill of the Strikemaster pilots and the coincidence of the replacement SAS squadron at Salalah, fully armed and ready to go. The *adoo* had a solid understanding of the fort and SAS compound in Mirbat and how it would be defended. They understood the weather and terrain. They understood how their enemy fought. So, their pre-mission intelligence collection of their objective was reasonably complete.

The *adoo* knew the composition and disposition of the forces at Mirbat that would be defending the town. So, the *adoo* leadership sent out a patrol near Mirbat to act as a diversion. It worked and a patrol of *firqat* were sent to investigate, which reduced the number of GoO troops to defend Mirbat.<sup>30</sup>

The *adoo* leadership decided to attack Mirbat during the monsoon season, also known as the khareef,<sup>31</sup> because they knew it would conceal their approach to the town. The monsoons brought fog, mist, and rain which would make it difficult for anyone in Mirbat to observe the assault force moving forward towards the obstacle belt. It also would restrict visibility for any air support, preventing the key advantage of the GoO forces: Strikemaster jets flown by the RAF. With fog drifting off the *jebel* and onto the

plain, it would be very difficult for the jets to observe the ground to provide close air support. This provided protection for the entire attack.

One of the SAS men inside the Mirbat compound was Pete Winner, author of *Soldier 'I': The Story of an SAS Hero*. This was his account of the war. His description, below, reinforces Jeapes's assessment of the competency of the intelligence work of the *adoo*.

Two thousand metres (sic) away, in the dark foothills of the *Jebel* Massif, I could clearly see the vivid flashes of six mortar tubes leaping into the night, dramatically illuminating their concealed baseplate positions. Nearer, from the *Jebel* Ali, the muzzle flashes of incoming machinegun (sic) and rifle fire sparked white-hot gloom . . . Green tracer from an RPD light machine gun rioted furiously against the walls of the DG (author's note: Dhofar Gendarmerie) fort on the northern edge of the town. A frenzied salvo of mortar bombs suddenly impacted, blowing away part of the perimeter wire. The fire mission crept slowly forward until the last round exploded on the edge of the town, sending pieces of shrapnel each the size of a fist screeching over the Batt House.<sup>32</sup>

In order to integrate all the supporting direct and indirect fires to support an attack on such a large area, a thorough terrain analysis must have been completed. The *adoo* used mortars, rockets, recoilless rifles, RPGs, and various types of machine-guns to suppress the objective and enable the assault force to approach its objective. For all those fires to be mutually supporting and not strike each other, the positions for each had to be well selected or the *adoo* risked dropping mortars on their infantry, machine-guns, or RPG force. To accomplish this, the *adoo* must have used an effective targeting process. Their fires were extremely effective during the assault and allowed *adoo* infantry to approach within hand grenade range.<sup>33</sup>

Another aspect to the Battle of Mirbat was operational security. The *adoo* conducted detailed planning, assembled the needed supply of ammunition of each type for each weapon system: smalls arms; light, medium, and heavy machine guns; mortars



from 60mm to 82mm, rounds for RPG-7s, 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, and 82mm rockets. They had to stockpile all the ammo and then move it to the assembly area where it could be distributed to the attack force. That no villagers learned of the preparation as well as none of the *firqa* units demonstrates solid operational security measures by the *adoo*.

Jeapes provided another excellent example of the *adoo*'s use of intelligence in his description of an *adoo* operation to seize caves near Shershitti in the western area of Dhofar near the border with Yemen. A battalion-sized element of SAF, *firqat*, and SAS conducted the operation to gain information about *adoo* logistics and caches in the caves at Shershitti. What Jeapes described was the GoO forces walking into a fire sack (a kill-zone in American parlance),<sup>34</sup> basically a large scale ambush, which the *adoo* expertly executed. To accomplish the ambush, the *adoo* required very detailed intelligence. They effectively conducted reconnaissance to locate specific terrain that could accommodate a large fire sack. Next the *adoo* observed the GoO military forces' approach to the fire sac and they provided early warning of the GoO approach without themselves being detected. It is obvious that the *adoo* commander executed the security mission effectively. The GoO forces were completely surprised.<sup>35</sup>

Another aspect of intelligence operations is counterintelligence (CI).<sup>36</sup> CI is the effort to determine if enemy agents have infiltrated a unit and have sources or informants conducting espionage, subversion, or sabotage. Plekhanov's narrative brings up CI operations by the GoO, but does not actually name it as such. "At various stages the Communists planted insurgents in key places. In early 1973 a number of serving soldiers

had been uncovered as Communist agents in the Army. They had been executed by firing squad.”<sup>37</sup>

With infiltrators in the SAF, the PFLOAG could receive early warning of pending operations against them. That knowledge would enable the *adoo* to either evade the operation completely, or to ambush the SAF. By placing infiltrators in the SAF, the *adoo* had the opportunity to answer specific intelligence requirements about SAF offensive operations and that developed into intelligence.

### Fires

The *adoo* were adept at the use of mortars. The terrain on the *jebel* facilitated the use of mortars. It extended the reach of the *adoo* without requiring them to move large forces in hot arid conditions. Mortar fire was also effective to keep the SAF, *firqat*, and SAS off balance while the *adoo* mobilized combat power from their surrounding areas. In his book, Jeapes described a series of mortar attacks that took place as the *firqat* and SAS established temporary positions on the *jebel* from which to launch patrols against the *adoo*. He described how an *adoo* mortar-man ably targeted their positions after a helicopter dropped off supplies inside their perimeter. The *adoo* mortar-man dropped a mortar round virtually on top of where a smoke grenade was used to guide the helicopter. This caused the entire patrol to scatter and build hasty fighting positions for protection against mortar rounds. The bombardment lasted a total of twelve days with continual effective targeting and harassment. The mortar-man understood that he had to shoot a few rounds and then move to a new position to prevent being targeted himself, and did so with great effect over twelve days.

The *adoo* mortar created havoc for the *firqat* and SAS patrol. The fires were accurate and achieved the mission to harass and delay the *firqat* and SAS operation. The *adoo* mortar person/personnel and observer/s adeptly targeted the *firqat* and SAS throughout the engagement and were well timed. To clarify, the skilled *adoo* mortar-man generated combat power through expertise and coordination.

The *adoo* were masters at deception, hiding their weapons systems or using flashlights or smoke to confuse the SAS as to their exact locations. Jeapes described an operation of the SAF and *firqat* to search for an *adoo* artillery piece that was shooting into the village of Taqa. Air support never observed the artillery piece when it fired nor in its hidden location when not being used. This prompted Jeapes to form a battalion-sized unit of SAF, *firqat*, and SAS to move onto the jebel and search for the artillery piece.

In the conduct of their search, the SAF, *firqat*, and SAS encountered *adoo* and found themselves in a fierce engagement of direct fires at close range. They withdrew to prepare a hasty defense and prepare to re-engage the *adoo* when they had their conditions set. They were surprised by a sudden and overwhelming increase in *adoo* firepower.

The *adoo* fought fiercely and for some minutes intense machine-gun and mortar fire was directed at nobody in particular in an apparent waste of ammunition. Only later did we realise (sic) that this was probably to cover the withdrawal of the big gun.<sup>38</sup>

The above passage described how *adoo* direct and indirect fires were used to conduct movement, in this case withdrawal. The heavy volume of fires caused the SAF/*firqat*/SAS unit to seek cover and concealment and wait out the barrage. This gave the *adoo* the ability to disperse and displace their force to withdraw with the artillery piece. Jeapes came to his own conclusion after a patrol he sent out towards the edge of the escarpment discovered the firing position of the gun, including ammunition. This

example of using indirect and direct fires to support Movement and Maneuver demonstrates the *adoo* could effectively generate Combat Power through effective and adaptive use of Fires.

The Battle of Mirbat was an impressive display of direct and indirect fires capability. The intent of the *adoo* was to destroy the garrison, enter Mirbat, and then use non-lethal targeting to intimidate the townspeople and convince them that following the government was a bad idea.<sup>39</sup> To accomplish that intent, the *adoo* needed to destroy the GoO military forces in Mirbat. They infiltrated the area using the fog and mist to approach mostly unnoticed. They surrounded the town on three sides, the forth side being the sea. So, effectively the town was surrounded. Leading up to the attack on the fort and SAS compound at Mirbat, the *adoo* commander had sufficient understanding of the operational environment, the enemy his forces would face (the GoO military units), the layout and composition of all the targets on the objective. The *adoo* initiated fires with their mortars, quickly followed by rockets, RPGs, and machine-guns of various sizes. Through effective pre-mission intelligence preparation, the *adoo* had designated specific walls on the old DG fort as their point of penetration. In short, the *adoo* used direct and indirect fires to isolate GoO military forces in Mirbat, fix them, and used their fires to cover the approach of their assault force. The Battle of Mirbat was the first time the *adoo* had undertaken such large scale operation. Their use of fires generated combat power and if not for the skill of the RAF Strikemaster pilots and the replacement squadron of SAS at Salalah, the results of the battle most likely would have been a victory for the *adoo*.

### Sustainment

Insurgencies many times depend upon local population for many types of support, including logistics and medical support. The *adoo* used the villages close to the coast for the same purposes. Jeapes described how Salim Mubarak and Mohammed Said, on a visit to Mirbat, decided to identify townspeople who provided support to the *adoo*. Salim and Mohammed, both being former *adoo*, knew *adoo* contacts in Mirbat.

Both here and in Taqa the *adoo* still had a cell of supporters who organised (sic) food and medical supplies for the *adoo*. From time to time they even hid fighters who came into the town disguised as herdsmen or who brought loaded with wood from the *jebel* which the townsmen needed for fuel.<sup>40</sup>

From this it can be seen that the villagers functioned as a logistical and health services support system to the *adoo*, either through a belief in the ideology of PFLOAG or under intimidation by them. This support enabled the *adoo* to travel very light, without the need to carry more than very basic supplies as they could pick up food at virtually anyone's home. The *adoo* also knew they could acquire help in many towns and villages. This provided the *adoo* more freedom of action, as well as an extended operational reach, and it certainly prolonged their endurance by allowing them to travel without the weight of food or water normally required something the GoO military forces could not replicate. Through the use of villagers and *jebelis* as their strategic, operational, and tactical support systems for logistics and medical supplies, the *adoo* could dedicate more forces to combat tasks. Effective use of the population in support of *adoo* fighters validates successful implementation of the Sustainment Element of Combat Power. Also, less *adoo* conducting logistics equals more *adoo* available to fight the GoO military forces.

The *adoo* also excelled at the management of logistics. The *adoo* mortar man, the Battle of Mirbat, and the operation at Shershitti demonstrated that the *adoo* effectively

projected ammunition requirements to sustain their operations. At Mirbat and Shershitti the *adoo* moved their ammunition to their assembly points, then on to the attack position, and then onward to the actual firing positions by ammunition type: 7.62 for small arms, 7.62 for machine-guns, RPG rounds, rockets, and mortar rounds. There were no vehicles or other method to move the ammunition. It was ported by the *adoo*. The attack at Mirbat lasted almost five to six hours and the *adoo* sustained their fires throughout.<sup>41</sup> The engagement at Shershitti lasted approximately an hour per Jeapes narrative<sup>42</sup> and Major General John Akehurst.<sup>43</sup> The ammunition supplies to sustain the rates of fire described at Mirbat and Shershitti indicate a robust and effective logistics function that generated combat power.

In another display of *adoo* logistics capability, Jeapes finds a huge cache. It happened on the operation which Jeapes led to search for the artillery piece shooting at Taqa. Jeapes commented he had difficulties convincing the *firqat* to resume their combat patrols. “It was important to regain the initiative. Though the *firqat* were busily involved destroying the main *adoo* supply sump they had discovered, nearly two tons of rice, sugar and corn, I wanted to use them against the enemy in person.”<sup>44</sup> The sheer volume of supply found in this one cache is staggering. The rice, sugar, and corn were not grown in Yemen. The staples had to be imported into Yemen first. Next the quantities had to get moved to Hauf, close to the border between PDRY and Oman. There the PFLOAG logisticians had to break down the supplies into parcels that could be carried by camels. The next step was organizing a camel caravan through the *adoo*’s version of the Ho Chi Mihn Trail, navigating across an international border, through desert, in mountainous terrain, and then distributed by parcel to different *adoo* groups from west to east. Over

time small parcels built up into tons supplies. The people who designed, developed, moved, and distributed supplies clearly were effective and creative logisticians. Additionally, someone also had to maintain a huge population of camels as well.

Jeapes provides some interesting insight into the PFLOAG personnel support in his description of a captured letter. Written by the First Political Commissar of the Ho Chi Mihn Unit of the Central Area of Dhofar, it was revealing in its description of disarray within the PFLOAG organization. Towards the end of the letter the author makes mention of how widows of *adoo* fighters were supported. “It was recorded also that the monthly payment to 'martyrs' widows was to be increased. A fighter did not at this time receive payment, which may be one reason why service in a loyal *firqat* seemed more attractive to so many, but if he were killed the Front paid his widow a pension.”<sup>45</sup>

The PFLOAG paid the equivalent of an accidental death annuity to the widows of *adoo* killed in action. This action directly applied to soldier welfare, readiness, to the widow and children, and improved quality of life. While there is no record of how much was paid, that any payments were made demonstrated a very strong commitment by the PFLOAG and their external supporters to the *adoo* who fought on the *jebel*. The support to widows complemented the PFLOAG logistic plans. While the *adoo* likely had little to no religious or legal support, apparently there was a dedication to force generation (human resources support), and financial management.

### Protection

Protection for an insurgent group is usually managed by the anonymity of its members. If the insurgents do not wear a uniform, live in the same area as the population, and appear to belong among the people, the anonymity seems to provide sufficient

protection for insurgent fighters. This worked well for the *adoo* when they went into the coastal villages. Few SAF or SAS would be able to recognize an *adoo*. As long as the population either covertly supported them or feared them, the *adoo* could hide within the population.

Jeapes intelligence in-brief at Taqa provided a glimpse at how the civilian population refused to provide information on the *adoo* to SAF or the SAS. The local population in Dhofar did not talk about the *adoo*. Either the population feared the *adoo* or they were loyal to their cause. By controlling the population, their silence protected the *adoo* forces, routes, and facilities by denying the counterinsurgent forces and GoO their information requirements. These information requirements were needed to conduct counterinsurgency operations against the *adoo*. Without information to turn into intelligence, counterinsurgency operations do not yield results very often.

In the below excerpt, Jeapes described an operation of the SAF and *firqat* to search for an *adoo* artillery piece that was shooting into the village of Taqa. They patrolled to the top of the *jebel* and built a hasty defense. If the *adoo* had observed the patrol moving on the *jebel*, the hasty defense would be necessary to repel any hasty attacks mounted by the *adoo*. The passage refers to Dherdhir, a leader of one of the *firqat*.

Dherdhir . . . had been lying in a dip in the ground with some other Firqat Salahadin men when he felt a need to answer the morning call of nature. He put his blanket over his head, picked up his rifle and wandered off into the mist following the line of the cattle hedge. It was not a long hedge and no sooner was he lost to view by his comrades than he came into view of a five-man *adoo* picket in a trench, standing-to at dawn in the best British-trained military tradition. One of them challenged him but immediately he heard another man say that it was a woman; the blanket over Dherdhir's head must have deceived him.<sup>46</sup>



The *adoo* preserved their force and protect personnel through discipline and sound tactical operations. By conducting stand-to, the *adoo* demonstrated discipline which protected the rest of the *adoo* force likely still sleeping in the village. The challenge from the *adoo* picket that solicited a counter-challenge from Dherdhir demonstrated intent to protect combatants instead of shooting first. That Dherdhir was not armed also contributed to the *adoo* assumption he was a non-combatant. One of the other *adoo* who responded that Dherdhir must be a woman demonstrated a willingness and understanding by these particular *adoo* to protect noncombatants.

Operational security measures for the Battle of Mirbat impressed Jeapes. Not even his own *firqat* received word of a pending attack. Per Jeapes narrative, the *adoo* leaders maintained close control of the eventual target and did not inform any of their attack force where they were going until linked up at the assembly point. In a tribal society like the Dhofar, maintaining such close control over the operational security of an attack that size is an accomplishment in and of itself.

Intelligence Support to Protection combines aspects of what an enemy force could do to harm an operation as well as what might impact recovery from the operation.<sup>47</sup> Planning the Battle of Mirbat during the monsoon season to protect against GoO air support, as mentioned above, was one example. Another example from the Battle of Mirbat was the use of fog to provide cover for the infiltration of 250-300 soldiers from a mountain onto a plain in front of a town, and into firing positions without being identified.<sup>48</sup> Another example from the Battle of Mirbat was how the *adoo* recovered their dead and wounded. The *adoo* did not abandon their dead or wounded on the battlefield.<sup>49</sup>

## Conclusions

The Dhofar Rebellion validates that insurgent forces do generate combat power in ways similar to that of counterinsurgent forces. There are differences in the mechanics of how the Elements of Combat Power are used to prepare for combat. In many insurgencies it is difficult to collect information on how the insurgent group manage their intelligence operations, what kind of intelligence products they build and use, and the PFLOAG are no exception. No sources were found that provided that level of fidelity.<sup>50</sup> Also, protection for insurgent groups does not seem to function the same as that for counterinsurgent forces. The *adool* seemed to absorb combat losses much easier than the SAF or the SAS. External support to counterinsurgency likely will always be vulnerable to combat losses as it is difficult to demonstrate that those losses support vital national interests. That was the case for the SAS. In regards to the PFLOAG, they implemented the Leadership, Movement and Maneuver, Intelligence, Fires, and Sustainment Elements of Combat Power routinely in their process for generating combat power.

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<sup>1</sup>Seconded refers to a practice of temporarily transferring a military person, typically officer or NCO, to assist a foreign military by placing experienced and trained personnel in positions of leadership.

<sup>2</sup>*Adool* is a general name for the PFLOAG fighters. It is the Arabic word for enemy.

<sup>3</sup>Jeapes notes many differences between the Arabs in the east of Oman and the Dhofaris. He also remarks that the Dhofaris have many similarities with Somalis. See Tony Jeapes, *SAS: Operation Oman* (London: William Kimber, 1980), 17.

<sup>4</sup>Ian Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan: A First Hand Account of the Dhofar Insurgency* (South Yorkshire, England: Pen & Sword Books, 2007), 11.

<sup>5</sup>Paul Sibley, *A Monk in the SAS* (Spiderwise: Paul Sibley, 2009), 60.

<sup>6</sup>*Jebel* is the Arabic word for mountain.

<sup>7</sup>Sibley, 60.

<sup>8</sup>Jeapes, 239.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 37-8.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 60. Jeapes draws a distinction that SAF were not armed with machine-guns. Small arms, like AK-47s, may fire on automatic, but they are not machine-guns. A machine-gun is belt or link fed, usually only fires on automatic, and at a high rate of fire. This enables the machine-gunner to rapidly achieve fire superiority against small arms.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-23.

<sup>13</sup>Jeapes, 122.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>16</sup>Fix- A tactical mission task where a commander prevents the enemy from moving any part of his force from a specific location for a specific period. See US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-16.

<sup>17</sup>Jeapes, 37-8.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Sergey Plekhanov, *A Reformer on the Throne: Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said* (London: Trident Press, 2004), 106

<sup>21</sup>Counter mobility [*sic*] operations—Those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to deny an adversary freedom of movement and maneuver. See US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-10.

<sup>22</sup>A combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-24.

<sup>23</sup>Jeapes, 60.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 143-58.

<sup>25</sup>Sibley, 64.

<sup>26</sup>Cover- Protection from the effects of fires. Concealment- protection from observation or surveillance. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-10 and 1-9 respectively.

<sup>27</sup>Gardiner, 132.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>29</sup>Jeapes, 40.

<sup>30</sup>S. Monic, *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 12, no. 4 (1982), <http://scientiamilitaria.journals.ac.za> (accessed 19 November 2012), 15.

<sup>31</sup>Gardiner, 68.

<sup>32</sup>Pete Winner and Michael Paul Kennedy, *Soldier 'I': The Story of an SAS Hero* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1989), 109.

<sup>33</sup>Gardiner, 69.

<sup>34</sup>A fire sack is where fire is concentrated on an advancing enemy in a sudden and devastating strike or series of strikes. Fire sacks are formed on key terrain, enemy avenues of approach, defensive strongpoints, obstacles and barriers, and preplanned fires. Obstacles and barriers are planned along the edge of the fire sack to contain the enemy force, and reserves are placed where they can counterattack into the “sack” after the fires are lifted to destroy any remaining enemy. See U.S. Army, Field Manual 100-2-1, *The Soviet Army: Operations and Tactics* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 16 July 1984), 6-2.

<sup>35</sup>Jeapes, 199.

<sup>36</sup>Counterintelligence- Information gathered and activities conducted to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, or protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations or persons or their agents, or international terrorist organizations or activities. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-10.

<sup>37</sup>Gardiner, 74.

<sup>38</sup>Jeapes, 122.

<sup>39</sup>Gardiner, 68.

<sup>40</sup>Jeapes, 46.

<sup>41</sup>Pete Winner writes that the *adoo* took out the SAF force at Jebel Ali at about 5:00 and S. Monic reports that the *adoo* had withdrawn by about midday.

<sup>42</sup>Jeapes, 201.

<sup>43</sup>Monic, 12.

<sup>44</sup>Jeapes, 123.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 119.

<sup>47</sup>This is an intelligence warfighting function task that supports the protection warfighting function. It includes providing intelligence that supports measures which the command takes to remain viable and functional by protecting itself from the effects of threat activities. It also provides intelligence that supports recovery from threat actions. It includes analyzing the threats, hazards, and other aspects of an operational environment and utilizing the intelligence preparation of the battlefield process to describe the operational environment and identify threats and hazards that may impact protection. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-37, *Protection* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 31 August 2012), 1-7.

<sup>48</sup>Gardiner, 67-8.

<sup>49</sup>Apologising (sic) to those who may have heard it before, maybe I could tell my story of being in the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall some years later and seeing a friend sitting talking to a very smartly dressed Arab. I went over to say Hullo and asked the Arab where he came from. “Ah” he said “I am an Arab” “I know that”, I said, “but where is your home?” We established that he was a Dhofari and so we started talking about my time in Dhofar. “Were you there at the time of the battle of Marbat?” he asked. It turned out that he had been a fighter with the *Adoo* on that day!! In contrast to his smart suit and tie, he must have been dressed then in a loincloth, armed with an AK47 rifle and festooned with grenades and ammunition. I asked him how many casualties they suffered that day, saying we thought it was about 80. He said it was nearer 200 when all those who later died of wounds were taken into account. What is the purpose of this? You need to show the reader. See Talk given to the Bahrain Society on 28th November 2007 by Brigadier Peter Sincock, MBE Dhofar 1972-74.

<sup>50</sup>That is not to say none exist. Only that in the references reviewed by the author, none were noted.

## CHAPTER 4

### AFGHANISTAN (2001-PRESENT)

The current counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan will be used as the second of two case studies to determine if there are commonalities in how insurgent military forces generate combat power when compared with counterinsurgent forces. This chapter will analyze the actions of the Taliban fighting the insurgency throughout Afghanistan using the U.S. Army's current doctrinal definition of Elements of Combat Power. Chapter 3 established that the PFLOAG generated combat power using the principles established in U.S. Army doctrine, specifically the Elements of Combat Power. This chapter seeks to establish that the insurgents in Afghanistan generate combat power in a similar manner, even if not in exactly the same way.

Various types of sources were used to find examples of how Taliban generate combat power. As with the chapter on Dhofar, the author conducted a study of this war and personally interviewed many people with experience at various levels of responsibility in the counterinsurgency efforts. This chapter is organized thematically by the Elements of Combat Power as was the previous chapter.

## U.S.-Afghan War (2001-present)



Figure 3. U.S.-Afghan War (2001-present)

*Source:* Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Afghanistan (Shaded Relief) 2001, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/afghanistan\\_rel01.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/afghanistan_rel01.jpg) (accessed 23 November 2012).

### Overview of the Campaign and Region

By most standards Afghanistan is an inhospitable country because of extreme climates and tough, harsh topography. It is a landlocked country and borders Iran to the west and Pakistan to the south and east. The Central Asian States, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan border it on the north and northeast. China also shares a very

small border with Afghanistan. Well known for the Hindukush, Afghanistan is a mostly mountainous country with altitudes as high as 7485 meters. Afghanistan has four major rivers and many smaller ones, with only one river that actually leads to the sea, the rest drying out in the arid areas of the country.<sup>1</sup> The harsh environment created a very tough people and most invaders found the task of conquering Afghanistan extremely difficult.

Afghanistan has five major ethnic groups: Pashtun, Tajik, Hazarah, Uzbek, and Turkmen. It is also referred to as the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (IROA). Between 80 percent-85 percent of the population are Sunni Muslims and Shia make up between 15 percent-19 percent. A very small percentage of the population are Hindu or Sikh. Most Afghans have limited access to health care and infant/child mortality rates are among the highest in the world. Literacy rates are reported at 57 percent for men and 87 percent for women, despite the harsh subjugation women endure. Lack of access to education and attrition from a constant state of war restricts the number of skilled workers available for production. As such, agriculture is a dominant employer to the Afghan work force.<sup>2</sup>

The current conflict began after the attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. U.S. Army Special Forces, supported by agencies of the U.S. Intelligence Community, joined with the Northern Alliance to push out the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan run by the Taliban. The goal was to capture Osama bin Laden, suspected of planning and executing the attacks of 11 September. The Taliban government was toppled in October 2001, and afterwards the group assembled in Pakistan under its spiritual leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and began a slow insurgency to take back Afghanistan. Since then, the group adapted its insurgency to match the different military forces of the U.S. and NATO. The Taliban, with sporadic



backing from al Qaeda, continues to undermine the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Ambushes and IEDs are the hallmarks of the Taliban but they are also able to build battalion-sized forces to attack vulnerabilities of the Afghan National Police (ANP), Afghan National Army (ANA), the U.S. Army, and NATO. The Taliban receive various forms of assistance from Islamic charities which funnel support through Pakistan.

### Leadership

The Taliban adapted itself over time to reduce the attrition of its commanders to preserve its Leadership Element of Combat Power. The adaptive leadership styles can be attributed to U.S and ISAF success at targeting Taliban leadership. As successive levels of leadership were killed, the Taliban learned it needed to change.

The Taliban's top leaders behave in an authoritarian manner, outlining policy decisions, although Mullah Omar, once known for micromanagement, has been forced by the operational environment to adopt a less intrusive style of leadership. The Taliban's middle and lower tier leaders are more informal. They generally rely on consensus in a Jirga to maintain their support. Clergy and tribal elders usually vet decisions to elicit the support of the populace.<sup>3</sup>

The excerpt above, written by a Pakistani Army Officer, demonstrates some key aspects of the Taliban's Leadership Element of Combat Power. At the organizational level, Mullah Omar adapted his leadership style to the operational environment and delegated lower-level leaders with the task of generating consensus. He allowed lower-level Taliban leaders to work information and management systems to get buy in at the local level. Per doctrine, this can effectively generate combat power.

Leaders must understand how to mass combat power to execute operations. They need to grasp how to build tactical plans that support operational plans, which support a

strategic or campaign plan. Insurgents sometimes focus on demonstrating that the governing authorities are incapable of providing security to the population. In a Reuters article from 16 April, 2012, the Taliban carried out a large scale synchronized attack to demonstrate that the GIROA cannot protect the Afghan population.

The insurgents who mounted weekend attacks in central Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan carefully rehearsed for months, even building small military-style models and pre-positioning weapons, a Taliban spokesman said on Monday.

Zabihullah Mujahid provided Reuters with a rare insight into how the group plans strategic high-profile attacks designed to deal a psychological blow to U.S.-led NATO forces and their allies in the Afghan security forces.

In the latest, a 30-member suicide squad was dispatched to launch simultaneous assaults on parliament, NATO bases and Western embassies after two months of painstaking discussions on tactics.

“Our military experts sketched maps of the targets and also created a mock-up of them where fighters carried out practice before carrying out the large-scale operations in four provinces,” Mujahid said in a phone interview.

“The fighters also learned how to enter their targets and hold them.”<sup>4</sup>

Massing a platoon-sized attack inside Kabul and attacking seven locations at the same time is a prime example of how leadership synchronizes events, arranges activities in time and space, and masses combat power. Readers may note that the attacks were largely ineffective. That the attacks were ineffective is irrelevant. It does not detract from the Taliban’s effective generation of combat power and how they prepare for combat.

A Marine Force Reconnaissance Platoon, part of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marines created an After Action Review (AAR) from their experiences in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> In their AAR, the author/s provide feedback on their observations of the Taliban after their deployment. The picture they provide of the Taliban is one of an adaptive, flexible, and aggressive enemy force that will exploit any vulnerability by ISAF forces. In greater

specifics the author/s describe Taliban tactics that demonstrate an enemy with great understanding of tactical employment of direct and indirect fires. Some examples follow below:

Ambush: a platoon minus was patrolling the town when they were engaged with sporadic small arms fire from a distance. They returned fire and were moving further into the town when they were engaged by a single enemy fighter who fired on the platoon and broke contact. The platoon chased the fighter through the town when they suddenly found themselves in a dead end.

The enemy attacked the platoon from the rear and pushed them further into the dead end. The enemy had driven the platoon into a fire sack and they ambushed the platoon from the roof tops. This continued until aviation assets came over head and broke the ambush.<sup>6</sup>

Fire Control: Enemy forces have demonstrated a high level of fire control in numerous engagements. . . . Ambushes have generally been initiated with bursts of machinegun (sic) fire followed by volleys of RPGs. The beaten zone of the RPGs have been within six inches to a foot. This shows a very developed system of fire control and points to a section leader controlling these fires. The complexity and size of some of these ambushes point to a platoon and company level command structure.<sup>7</sup>

Interlocking fields of fire: The enemy did an excellent job of placing fighting positions in locations where they could mutually support each other. As elements of the platoon attacked one (enemy) position, they would be engaged from multiple firing positions. Several times during the engagement elements of the platoon would be pinned down from accurate fire coming from several directions.<sup>8</sup>

RPG Volley Fire: Almost every time the enemy attacked the armored vehicles, the enemy attacked with volleys of 2-3 RPGs. This demonstrated a high amount of coordination and discipline.<sup>9</sup>

Ambushes: The enemy . . . waited for the platoon to come within the effective range of their weapon systems. They engaged dismounted troops at 100-150 meters away with small arms and engaged vehicles from 200-300 with RPGs and PK machineguns (sic). The enemy utilized rockets and mortars to attack the platoon outside of 300 meters.<sup>10</sup>

Fire Discipline: The enemy has been extremely disciplined with their fire and only engaged targets who were within the effective range of their weapon systems. Enemy forces normally utilized RPGs on mounted forces and small arms on dismounted troops. They also generally fired their AKs on single shot. All

enemy fire was well aimed and very effective. Machineguns (sic) were well aimed and fired in bursts in order to conserve ammunition.<sup>11</sup>

Combined arms: The enemy demonstrated an advanced understanding of combined arms. Most of their attacks on the platoon combined machine gun fire with RPGs, rockets and mortars. Enemy forces used their PK machine guns to suppress turret gunners while several RPG gunners would engage vehicles with volleys of RPGs. They also attempted to fix the vehicles using RPGs and machinegun (sic) fire for attacks with rockets and mortars.<sup>12</sup>

Massing Forces: . . . Situations here in Afghanistan can quickly escalate and even company sized elements can find themselves outnumbered, outmaneuvered and outgunned. The enemy will not always mass but they will rally to defend their leadership or protect their interests. They have conducted ambushes that have swelled to 400 fighter engagements and have also massed to that size to conduct attacks on Forward Operating Bases.<sup>13</sup>

Defense in Depth: The enemy plans their defenses with depth and mutual support in mind. In one ambush the enemy engaged the platoon from a tree line that was supported by fighting position to the north that were tied into the defense and prevented us from flanking the ambush site. These machine gun positions had excellent fields of fire and machine guns were set in on the avenues of approach.<sup>14</sup>

The above accounts describe with great detail how the Taliban functioned as a force.

They planned and executed extremely effective ambushes, demonstrating sound tactical principles. Their fires, and the manner in which they control their fires, was disciplined and focused. The Taliban leadership massed the forces necessary to accomplish their mission, sometimes with as many as 400 fighters. The Marines faced a Taliban group with leaders who understood tactical and operational synchronization and understood how to mass combat power in time, space and with a unified purpose. This clearly demonstrates that at least some of the Taliban understand the same types of principles as the U.S. Army's Leadership Element of Combat Power.

## Information

Information enables commanders at all levels to make informed decisions on how best to apply combat power and creates opportunities to achieve definitive results.<sup>15</sup> The Taliban's version of how to create opportunities and achieve definitive results is somewhat different from that of U.S Army forces. They focus on strategic accomplishments. In direct contact, the Taliban understands that they do not have the ability on a continuous basis to dominate U.S. and ISAF forces at the tactical level. But their Information Operations demonstrate a keen understanding of how to seize the initiative. For the Taliban, telling the truth is irrelevant. They have no one who will be held accountable by the Afghans nor by the international community. As such, they use a mixture of truth and fabrication, and do so in near real time, to place U.S. and ISAF forces at a position of disadvantage. Some examples follow.

The below quote is from an article in Military review that analyzed the Taliban as an organization.

[I]n a coordinated operation, network features come into play, and the Taliban passes information and support horizontally, vertically, or diagonally (figure 7b)(*author note: figure not included*), with remarkable speed and efficiency—disrupting a few communication channels does not slow the passage. The Taliban has also successfully used network swarming tactics, in which small units converge on specific targets and then disperse. To relay sensitive verbal or written messages, the Taliban use couriers. The courier network relies on tribal links and loyalties for speed and security. The Taliban use short-range radios for tactical communications and employ an extensive code system.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, when the Taliban comes together to conduct a coordinated operation, they move information rapidly, securely, and provide the Taliban commanders the information they require to make decisions in a timely manner. Readers should note that the Taliban have their own distinctive measure of time and sometimes information

moves very fast, or slow, but in time for the commander to make decisions on how and when to apply the combat power at their disposal. The time involved may also serve Taliban commanders in assembling outside support slow enough that U.S. Army, ISAF, and Afghan National Army (ANA) intelligence operations are unable to detect it. The Taliban commanders seem to function best under those conditions.

In the May-June 2010 edition of Military review, in an article by then Captain Leonardo Flor, titled “Harnessing Information Operations’ Potential Energy”, he describes an engagement with the Taliban. His unit had conducted a successful engagement against Taliban forces, but read what happened in the middle of the engagement.

In our second full month of the deployment, our Alpha company air assaulted into the Watapor Valley and precipitated a fierce engagement that left dozens of insurgents dead and killed two paratroopers. At the end of the day though, we had won the engagement, but we quickly lost the information operations battle. During the battle, insurgents had used a single satellite phone to tell local media that we had indiscriminately killed dozens of civilians. Instead of exploiting a tactical victory, we were instantly on our heels, explaining to the population and our own headquarters that it was all untrue.<sup>17</sup>

The above quote demonstrates the Taliban’s dynamic understanding of Information Operations. In this instance they use an Information Operation which has the effect of rendering Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, all but combat ineffective until an investigation clears them of false charges. The Taliban used this particular Information Operation to not only generate its own combat power, but also in an offensive manner that negatively impacted a U.S. Army unit.

Information is also used by the Taliban to conduct Inform and Influence activities.

Radical, violent Islamists understand the significance of education as a fulcrum in the war. They organize lines of operation under the assumption that long-term control of society depends on what the rising generations of Muslim youth are taught to believe—educating Muslim youth is vital to achieving the Islamists’ long-term goals. The Taliban, for example, have attacked non-madrassah schools, murdered teachers, and intimidated parents and children. In 2006, they destroyed over 200 schools, killed 20 teachers, and drove more than 200,000 children from the classroom.<sup>18</sup>

By destroying non-madrassah schools, assassinating teachers, and intimidating parents and children, the Taliban influence future generations of Afghans. If 200,000 children do not have a place to learn, and 57 percent of men and 87 percent of women in Afghanistan are literate, then the Taliban must be providing madrassah-based education for large numbers of Afghans. By providing their own version of education to boys, the Taliban drive a wedge between the population and the GIROA. If the trend continues, it is likely that the Taliban will accomplish its intent at the strategic level: implement the Taliban version of Sharia Law throughout Afghanistan. With that accomplished in Afghanistan, and madrassas in Pakistan as its source for recruiting young adult fighters, the Taliban have guaranteed as much combat power as they will ever need to accomplish its tactical, operational, and strategic intent.

#### Movement and Maneuver

When Estonia joined NATO in 2004, an interesting circumstance took place. Officers who had previously served alongside military units of the USSR in Afghanistan found themselves on secondary or tertiary tours with NATO forces in the current conflict. One such officer, Major Eero Kinnunen, wrote a comparison/contrast article of his two tours for the Military Review and his narrative described the Taliban Movement and

Maneuver Element of Combat Power. Below are a few extracts from the article about his tour in Now Zad.

[G]reen zones are more than farming regions. They are fortified zones for a static defense. The Taliban enjoy freedom of movement and concealment behind the high adobe walls that screen the wadi and protect the individual land holdings. The Taliban engineered these green zones for positional defense. They mouse-holed firing ports into the walls, situated their machine guns with interlocking fields of fire, and established alternate firing positions as well as redundant fall-back positions throughout the zone. They reinforced these with an integrated system of bunkers and trench-works. Their thick adobe bunkers proved somewhat mortar- and bomb-proof.<sup>19</sup>

Afghanistan's terrain quickly absorbs available combat power, particularly in the green zones. After fighting our way through the first two or three walled complexes—often with the aid of mortars and air strikes—our combat power was expended. Then I would begin the withdrawal. Even if I had no contact on the way in, I would always have contact withdrawing. The Taliban always launched a pursuit. They hoped to get close enough so that we could not successfully employ our mortars.<sup>20</sup>

There were two different groups of Taliban in our area, the local members who were eager fighters but not well trained, and the outside Taliban, who spoke with a different dialect than the locals and were better trained. The latter group included those who placed the IEDs along the roads.<sup>21</sup>

The Taliban modified the green zones to support their operations and deny the effective use of terrain to its adversaries. They focused their efforts to enable their freedom of movement as well as cover and concealment, interlocking fields of fire, mutually supporting defensive positions, and IEDs to provide counter-mobility against ISAF forces. These changes to the environment facilitate operations against their enemies. This provides the Taliban a position of advantage over counterinsurgency forces, provide pre-positioned direct and indirect firing positions that support their maneuver, and enable them to achieve surprise, shock, and momentum. The two Taliban forces in the Now Zad region demonstrate they build combat power through Movement and Maneuver.



A Time Magazine article from July, 2010, focuses on changes in the Taliban's tactics. The excerpt below focuses on how Taliban fighters observe the movement of counterinsurgent forces and are prepared to exploit any vulnerability.

This time around, they pushed forward without drawing major fire. But then they went too far: more than a quarter-mile (author's note: approximately 400m) beyond their designated patrol zone and a two-hour hike from the adobe outpost that Lima Company of the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, calls home in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province. The column was exposed in a rutted clearing, and the gathering desert wind limited their field of vision and their ability to call in air support. Taliban gunmen quickly exploited the mix of vulnerabilities, opening fire from a mud compound on a sun-flanked ridge, shooting in short bursts that sent Marines scrambling for cover in nearby culverts.<sup>22</sup>

Complex ambushes are also on the rise. Two weeks ago, militants hiding in the tree line started firing at another Marine company squad, deliberately forcing the Americans and their Afghan army allies to run the opposite way, smack into a directional fragmentation device. The massive explosion killed one Marine instantly and, a half hour after he lost three limbs, an Afghan soldier. It was one of six brutally successful strikes in a two-week period.<sup>23</sup>

The Taliban understand how to use maneuver warfare. It appears that they have gathered a depth of understanding of their operational environment that is difficult for counterinsurgent forces to counter. As counterinsurgent forces move through the terrain, the Taliban appear to know all possible directions of travel and the possibilities for engagements. They seek meeting engagements<sup>24</sup> where they have the initiative and can bring their direct fires against the counterinsurgent forces to dominate the situation. This allows them to use judgment in when to attack, when to wait, or when to ignore counterinsurgent forces. All this combines to enable the Taliban to deploy, move, maneuver, employ direct fires, occupy an area, conduct mobility and counter-mobility operations, and enables reconnaissance and surveillance. This generates combat power.

## Intelligence

The Taliban have a very robust intelligence capability. While they make mistakes, they are able to develop targeting against threats, have a capable network of informants, support from villagers, well trained soldiers that can conduct ISR, counterintelligence capabilities, and have penetrated into many levels of the ANA and GIROA.

Below is an example of how the Taliban use the Intelligence Element of Combat Power to conduct targeting.

The enemy did not attempt to penetrate the crew compartment of the vehicles they engaged. They fired volleys of RPGs to the front end of the HMMWVs in order to disable them and start a vehicle fire. Once the crew evacuated, they would engage them with crew served weapons. This demonstrates a very detailed understanding of the limitations of their weapon systems and a thorough knowledge of our armor vulnerabilities.<sup>25</sup>

The Taliban determined limitations of their weapons systems against specific vehicles used by the U.S. Marine Corps. The Taliban then shared this intelligence internally to enhance their capabilities when conducting ambushes. This is an example of intelligence support to targeting and information capabilities.

In the July-August 2011 edition of Military Review, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Darling from the Alaska National Guard provides an account of his experience in Afghanistan. His initial goals were to develop intelligence about his enemy, the Taliban, and determine their TTPs. After his second engagement did not end the way he wanted, he developed a plan to increase his mobility and ability to project force.

It took two weeks to develop our plan and another two weeks for approval, allocation, and execution. Our final plan was resource-intensive and impressive. (The mandatory 45 slides were magnificent in their high-resolution imagery and detailed phases.)

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment's long-distance, heavy-lift helicopter would transport multiple A-Teams with foreign special operations

forces to a landing zone right outside Surkhagan in the early morning. To quickly gain the high ground, additional small teams would insert themselves just next to the hilltops from which the enemy shot at me. Ground forces including Special Forces, explosive ordnance disposal specialists, Romanian Army soldiers, and Afghan police would converge on the town of Surkhagan from the north and west. B-1s, AC-130s, and Reapers would blanket the sky. No Taliban could escape this unstoppable force, and indeed, no Taliban did. Their complete absence made Surkhagan a dry hole that day.<sup>26</sup>

The above passage describes how the Taliban determined the conditions were not favorable for their operations. They likely used agents in the ANP to provide early warning (surveillance) of the impending operation. It is unlikely that two weeks of a counterinsurgent force preparing for combat went unnoticed.

In addition to informants among the population, the Taliban have infiltrated the GIROA military, police, and government through a capable counter-intelligence program. One example of how the Taliban deeply penetrated GIROA was the assassination of General Mohammad Daud Daud, the Police Chief for Northern Afghanistan. He was killed by a long time member of his personal security team who was turned by the Taliban and then used to target Mr. Daud because he had access and opportunity.

Mr Khan Mohammad was killed in a suicide attack carried out by his own bodyguard. The bodyguard had served Mr Khan for years and was known to enjoy a good rapport with him.

The attack left the establishment perplexed.

“How can we explain this to the people, especially the Americans?” an aide to Mr Karzai asked.

“He was not a Taliban 10 years ago, he was not Taliban five years ago. Of course, he was recruited recently. Why and how did we fail to detect this?”<sup>27</sup>

One of the most noteworthy examples took place December 30, 2009. A Jordanian agent, Humam Khallil Mohammed, was supposed to work with the CIA as a source to collect information on high level al Qaeda and Taliban leadership. While at a CIA base in

Afghanistan, he blew himself up with a suicide bomb and killed up to nine others, including the CIA base chief.<sup>28</sup> While many details remain sketchy, Mohammed was a trusted potential source by the CIA and Jordanian intelligence officers and used that access to provide information to the Taliban and al Qaeda. Using an infiltrator acting as a double agent to deliver precision-guided munitions at a specific target qualifies as effectively using the Intelligence Element of Combat Power.

### Fires

The Taliban version of the smart bomb is the suicide bomber. Suicide bombers allow the Taliban to place fires almost exactly at the time and location of their choosing to support their offensive tasks, defensive tasks, or the targeting of specific GIROA military, police, or governmental leadership targets. Over the course of the war, the use of suicide bombers has become more effective as the Taliban have acquired better access to their targets.

The turban bomb, according to a Reuters report earlier this month, represents a new tactic for insurgents in Afghanistan. In fact, Rabbani's death marks the fourth time the strategy has been used since July 14, when a suicide bomber concealing explosives in his turban blew himself up outside a memorial service for Ahmed Wali Karzai, the half-brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, in Kandahar. Subsequent turban attacks killed Kandahar mayor Ghulam Haider Hamidi and targeted the Helmand Military Corps Center on Afghanistan's Independence Day.<sup>29</sup>

Because Afghans consider searching a turban as an insult, this tactic was effectively employed numerous times. The Taliban used it to assassinate individuals with precision and control the number of innocent casualties. In turn, the Taliban demonstrate to the population that they will assassinate GIROA officials who they determine are corrupt

while not inflicting casualties on the population. Doing so effectively implements the Fires Element of Combat Power.

In support of ground operations the Taliban developed extremely efficient direct and indirect fires, especially in regard to fire control measures. In support of this comment U.S. Marines have reported that members of the Taliban have fought continuously for as much as 40 hours.<sup>30</sup> Effective use of fires and fire discipline enhances operations, reduces logistical requirements, and allows the Taliban to travel lighter. Thus, effective implementation of fires enhances the Movement and Maneuver and Sustainment Elements of Combat Power as well.

The Taliban have some well-trained specialists—gunners who can hit your 100- to 200-square-meter camp with a 107mm rocket from seven kilometers away on the first shot. . . . They have gone to 60mm mortars because our counter-battery radar can detect 82mm mortars, but often misses smaller rounds. Once, a Taliban forward observer chased my command post and me with some 40 rounds of 60mm mortar fire. He knew what he was doing, had good communications, and kept us running.<sup>31</sup>

In the above example, Major Kinnunen describes a situation very similar to that of the Trucial Oman mortar-man from chapter 3. When the Taliban can implement effective harassment fires they prevent counterinsurgent forces from massing against them. This not only allows the Taliban time to build their own combat power and conduct maneuver, it also restricts counterinsurgent forces from massing their combat power.

A final example of how the Taliban implements the Fires Element of Combat Power at the tactical level with strategic consequences is kidnapping foreign non-combatants.

The Taliban's international influence was also evident in the July 2007 abduction and apparent execution of two German nationals involved in a dam project (along with five Afghans) and the kidnapping of a busload of South Korean missionaries. Taliban members claim they executed the Germans after

Germany ignored a deadline to withdraw its 3,000 troops from Afghanistan. The Korean hostages faced a similar fate when the Taliban demanded Korea withdraw its 200 troops from the region. After the Taliban killed two of the Koreans, the South Korean government gave in to the Taliban's demand and agreed to pull its personnel out of Afghanistan. (the remaining hostages were released.)<sup>32</sup>

While kidnapping combatants or non-combatants is not always successful<sup>33</sup>, kidnapping of non-combatants, especial from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), proved useful or the Taliban would desist. In the above example the Taliban leveraged violence against non-combatants (lethal targeting), to compel external supports of the GIROA to do their will (non-lethal targeting).<sup>34</sup>

The Taliban demonstrate a mastery of how to generate combat power using the Fires Element of Combat Power, in the implementation of Information Operations, and by using lethal targeting in support of non-lethal targeting at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

### Sustainment

The Taliban, much like the PFLOAG, established an impressive sustainment capability. In regards to logistics, they have a system which moves ammunition, weapons, in some circumstances the latest cold weather or technical clothing.

Some Taliban still fight as they did a decade ago, in flip-flops and traditional baggy pants, but the hard-core "Taliban cavalry" is equipped with North Face jackets, good boots, warm clothing and swift motorbikes purchased in Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

Taliban with name brand clothing and equipment demonstrates a dedicated effort of logistical material support and transportation systems to acquire the right sizes for specific Taliban fighters, store it, move it, and distribute it. With first rate gear the

Taliban are better able to mass their combat power for sustained operations as they are not as restricted by inclement weather.

But Taliban logistics doesn't just provide basic material support. The fighters require ammunition to sustain the combat operations. The Taliban logistical support to fires, direct and indirect, is enviable by any military standard.

The Taliban made some 8,000 improvised explosive devices last year, an astonishing rate of almost 22 a day. "An enemy that can generate 8,000 IEDS and bring 8,000 IEDS to bear and have a major effect, we ought to hire the J-4, the logistician," said a top general with the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force.<sup>36</sup>

We came in fast and took the house that was storing the cache and found three Chinook loads of assorted weapons and ammunitions.<sup>37</sup> (author's note: the Chinook can move 28,000 lbs of cargo, so the cache was about 84,000 lbs or 42 tons)

As with the PFLOAG, the Taliban logisticians demonstrate a mastery of their profession.

This capability supports the Taliban Warfighter and generates combat power.

Taliban Personnel Services support their warfighting effort by providing recruits, supporting them with legal and religious support, and also with financial services. As their recruiting effort begins at madrassas, the new Taliban recruits are already religiously and legally indoctrinated with Islam and the Pashtunwali<sup>38</sup> requirement for badal, or revenge.

The Taliban do not have a formal recruitment process. They draw new recruits from among madrassa students and local tribal youths motivated by the appeal of glamour, feelings of revenge, financial incentives, and religious beliefs. The local cell is the recruiting hub. Recruitment exploits family and clan loyalties, tribal lineage, personal friendships, social networks, madrassa alumni circles, and shared interests. After innocent Afghans suffer collateral damage in coalition operations, the desire for badal<sup>39</sup> prompts an influx of recruits. To boost recruiting efforts, the Taliban often uses its fighters as bait to induce violent U.S. and NATO responses.

Because almost everyone in Pashtun tribal society is armed, recruits usually possess basic military skills. They receive significant on-the-job training and must prove their military ability in a peer-review system similar to those routinely employed in Pashtun tribes. Brave, pious, and politically sound recruits gain prominence within a cell. Soon, they either become its leader or depart to form a new cell of their own.<sup>40</sup>

Impoverished Afghan or Pakistani young men find that one of their only paths to make a better life is through education in a madrassa. It is there that the Taliban find their recruits. For those impoverished Afghans who are not able to go to a madrassa, the Taliban has other offers and methods.

The Taliban often entice tribesmen and farmers with a variety of offers on a “seasonal” basis in different provinces, including “piece-rates of \$10 to \$20 a day for joining a given attack on Western forces,” \$15 to launch a single mortar round into nearby coalition military bases, and \$1,000 for the head of a government worker or a foreigner.<sup>80</sup> A 205th Corps officer believes the Taliban’s cash comes from Pakistan and the flourishing drug trade. In addition, Afghan officials believe that certain Arab countries are also funding the insurgency.<sup>41</sup>

Either by direct recruiting at a madrassa or through short term contracts for support, the Taliban have managed their personnel system effectively to generate the combat power they require to sustain operations. After 10 years of war, if the Taliban could not effectively recruit young men, its combat activities would have culminated long ago.

### Protection

The Taliban version of protection differs from that of the U.S. Army but that is not to say they do not implement protection. The Taliban seem able to endure the continual loss of personnel to combat operations, either through injury or by death. The concept of martyrdom in the cause of Allah seems to enable Taliban fighters to remain calm and collected when under direct and indirect fires by counterinsurgents. It seems



likely that they derive protection from a similar fatalistic attitude as that of the adoo, a combination of fatalism and faith.<sup>42</sup>

The enemy is not scared by noise. During the fight we observed a fighter calmly aim an RPG while 50 cal rounds were kicking up within a meter of his position. This is a dedicated enemy that is not easily frightened.<sup>43</sup>

The population of Afghanistan has fought amongst each other and against foreigners for much of its history. Since the Soviet invasion of 1979, not much has changed in regards to the constant state of warfare. Over that time, the fighters learned clandestine techniques for emplacing mines and IEDs which preserves their combat power and restricts counterinsurgents from disrupting their operations.

The Taliban are patient and crafty when they plant roadside bombs, one of the biggest threats to American forces. They often do it in stages to avoid detection, according to American forces.

One man will drop off the explosives; the next day, a man will put in the charge; a day later someone will link up the materiel for detonation, and finally an insurgent will leave a marker—sticks across a path, a bundle of hay or rocks on the track.<sup>44</sup>

By using time as a means of providing security, the Taliban protect their forces and preserve their combat power. But by far the greatest ability of the Taliban to protect their fighters is the ability to stop fighting when the conditions are not in their favor. The Taliban do not wear uniforms and as long as the local population does not actively deny them support and inform against them to counterinsurgent forces, their fighters can blend in with villagers.

The fight in southern Afghanistan between insurgents and NATO troops, along with Afghan forces still learning on the job, is not a conventional war. A lot of it is harassment, the deadly kind. The Taliban shoot, drop their weapons and walk off. They plant roadside bombs and disappear. They know that they will lose a head-on clash with Western firepower.<sup>45</sup>

As insurgents, the Taliban can appear as part of the population one moment and take up the fight when they determine the conditions favor them. In this way, they build combat power at the time and location of their choosing, and protect their force by melding with friendly tribes, families, or farmers. In this manner, a tactic favored by many insurgents, the Taliban not only build combat power, but they employ the Protection Element of Combat Power far better than counterinsurgent forces do by hiding behind fortified base camps and hesco barriers.

### Review

#### Leadership

The Taliban meet the requirements specified in ADRP 6-22 Army Leadership in its description of the Leadership Element of Combat Power. They have effective, competent leaders who display a mastery of tactical and operational capabilities. They are able to mass their fighters when they set the conditions for their success. Taliban leaders understand how to arrange their operations in time, space and purpose to mass combat power and to dominate a situation. The Taliban rarely overwhelm the U.S. Army or ISAF forces at the tactical level, but they are formidable adversaries at the operational and strategic levels using the Leadership Element of Combat Power.

#### Information

The Taliban dynamically implement the Information Element of Combat Power. They deftly use communications to further their own operations as well as restrict counterinsurgent operations. They demonstrate they can render U.S. Army and ISAF forces combat ineffective for periods of time using information operations. Their

implementation of the Information Element of Combat Power supports their operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

### Movement and Maneuver

As irregular fighters with unparalleled understanding of their terrain, the Taliban ably use Movement and Maneuver to generate combat power. They understand how to gain a position of advantage over counterinsurgent forces by appearing suddenly, employing direct and indirect fires, and then disappear rapidly. When pursued, the Taliban understand how to break contact. When conducting pursuit, the Taliban understand how to use direct and indirect fires to take advantage of counterinsurgent vulnerabilities. This demonstrates the Taliban understands how to use Movement and Maneuver to generate combat power.

### Intelligence

The Taliban has informant networks that provide information and intelligence that enable their operations. When counterinsurgent forces begin to mass against them, the Taliban informants provide early warning. They understand how to use the Intelligence Element of Combat Power to target vulnerabilities of the counterinsurgent forces. The Taliban also proved their ability to use counterintelligence to insert infiltrators into U.S., ISAF, and GIROA military forces to cause havoc and reduce counterinsurgent capabilities. They demonstrate a strong understanding of how to use the Intelligence Element of Combat Power to their best advantage.

## Fires

The Taliban are experts at mobile warfare and implementation of direct and indirect fires to support their rapid maneuver. They are able to travel light, conduct ambushes or attacks with great skill and control of fires, and then disengage. The Taliban are able to employ effective indirect fires to harass their enemies. They capably implement fires to generate combat power.

## Sustainment

The Taliban have a sustainment system that has enabled ten years of insurgency. U.S. military and ISAF forces routinely discover large caches of supplies that can provide Taliban the endurance to maintain their operational tempo for extended periods of time. They have a very well developed system for recruiting new personnel that is fed by their culture as a warrior society. The Taliban implement the Sustainment Element of Combat Power with great effectiveness.

## Protection

The Taliban do not appear to implement the Protection Element of Combat Power as well as they do other elements. This may be because culturally it is not as important to implement protection of their personnel. Religious and cultural reasons may override the requirements for protection as the Taliban generate combat power. It does not appear as a restriction so far after ten years of war.

## Conclusion

The Taliban remain a formidable force. They are flexible and adaptive. If the Taliban were not able to generate combat power, they could not continue to fight after ten

years of what amounts to attrition warfare against the U.S., ISAF, and GIROA military forces. They do not generate combat power in the same way as U.S. military forces but that has little relevance. The Taliban use the Elements of Combat Power to prepare for combat and in generating the combat power they require to conduct their style of warfare.

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<sup>1</sup>Library of Congress, Country Profile: Afghanistan, August 2008, [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+af0030](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+af0030) (accessed 23 November 2012).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Major Shahid Afsar, Pakistan Army; Major Chris Samples, U.S. Army; and Major Thomas Wood, U.S. Army, “The Taliban- An Organizational Analysis,” *Military Review* (May-June 2008): 67.

<sup>4</sup>Hamid Shalizi and Mirwais Harooni, “Afghan Taliban says rehearsed attack for two months,” 17 March 2012, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/17/us-afghan-taliban-plan-idUSBRE83F0LX20120417> (accessed 19 November 2012)

<sup>5</sup>2nd Platoon, Force Recon Company, I MEF, Capt Byron Owen and MSgt Brian M. Blonder, United States Marine Corps, *The Eagle Went Over the Mountain After Action Review of combat tour in Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: Pentagon, 2009), 31.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>US Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 3-0*, 3-2.

<sup>16</sup>Afsar, Samples, and Wood, 67.

<sup>17</sup>Captain Leonardo J. Flor, “Harnessing Information Operations Potential Energy,” *Military Review* (May-June 2010): 58.

<sup>18</sup>Major Todd Schmidt, “Reforming the Madrassah- A Disregarded Dimension in the War on Terror,” *Military Review* (May-June 2008): 29.

<sup>19</sup>Major Eero Kinnunen, Estonian Defense Forces and Lieutenant Colonel Lester Grau, U.S. Army, Retired, “Two Tours in Afghanistan- Twenty Years and Two Armies Apart,” *Military Review* (May-June 2011): 47.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>22</sup>Jason Motlagh, “The Taliban's Changing, and Deadly, Tactics,” *Time*, 1 July 2010, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2000956,00.html> (accessed 19 November 2012).

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>Meeting engagement—A combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-24.

<sup>25</sup>AAR presentation, Force Reconnaissance Platoon, 3d Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

<sup>26</sup>Lieutenant Colonel Paul Darling, “The Five Fights of the Surkhagan and the Future of ISAF,” *Military Review* (July August 2011): 28.

<sup>27</sup>Bilal Sarwary, “Shift in Taliban tactics alarms Afghanistan government, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13589764> (accessed 19 November 2012)

<sup>28</sup>Richard A. Oppel Jr., Mark Mazzetti and Souad Mekhennet, “Attacker in Afghanistan Was a Double Agent,” *New York Times*, 5 January 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/05/world/asia/05cia.html> (accessed 19 November 2012).

<sup>29</sup>Uri Friedman, “The Turban Bomb: A Troubling New Taliban Tactic,” *Atlanticwire.com*, <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2011/09/turban-bomb-troubling-new-taliban-tactic/42873/> (accessed 19 November 2012).

<sup>30</sup>2nd Platoon, Force Recon Company, I MEF, 35.

- <sup>31</sup>Kinnunen and Grau, 49.
- <sup>32</sup>Afsar, Samples, and Wood, 71.
- <sup>33</sup>The Taliban still hold U.S. Army Specialist Bowe Robert Berggdahl without much notice by the U.S. or international community.
- <sup>34</sup>“South Korean hostages head back home from Afghanistan,” *New York Times*, 31 August 2007, [www.nytimes.com/2007/08/31/world/asia/31iht-hostages.4.7336781.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/31/world/asia/31iht-hostages.4.7336781.html) (accessed 19 November 2012).
- <sup>35</sup>Roy Gutman, “Afghanistan war: How Taliban tactics are evolving,” *McClatchy Newspapers*, 15 March 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0315/Afghanistan-war-How-Taliban-tactics-are-evolving> (accessed 19 November 2012).
- <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup>CSM Todd R. Yerger, “‘Able’ to adapt and conquer” (Personal Experience Papers, USASMA Digital Library, 10 March 2009), 13.
- <sup>38</sup>Afsar, Samples, and Wood, 67.
- <sup>39</sup>Badal (revenge)- When someone kills a family member or violates the honor of a woman in the family, revenge is necessary to restore honor. It often leads to a killing. This revenge can occur immediately or generations later if the family whose honor has been violated is in a weak position when the infraction occurs. Afsar, Samples, and Wood, 61.
- <sup>40</sup>Afsar, Samples, and Wood, 67-8.
- <sup>41</sup>Samuel Chan, “Sentinels of Afghan Democracy-The Afghan National Army,” *Military Review* (January-February 2009): 32.
- <sup>42</sup>Jeapes, 120.
- <sup>43</sup>2nd Platoon, Force Recon Company, I MEF, 31.
- <sup>44</sup>Christopher Torchia, “Forces adjust to unusual Taliban tactics,” *The Army Times*, 17 February, 2010, [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/02/ap\\_taliban\\_tactics\\_marjah\\_021710](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/02/ap_taliban_tactics_marjah_021710) (accessed 19 November 2012).
- <sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

This research project seeks to answer the following question: Are there commonalities in how insurgent military forces generate combat power when compared with counterinsurgent forces?

To answer the question and analysis of current U.S. doctrine was conducted to determine some rules by which the case studies would be measured. U.S. Army doctrine concerning the Elements of Combat Power from Army were used in conducting this determination. ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* provided the majority of the information. Other ADRP manuals specific to the individual Elements of Combat Power were used to provide greater fidelity in defining specific characteristics of each. The Mission Command Element of Combat Power was not included as there typically is not a sufficient body of information on how insurgents conduct planning for their operations. This was a limiting factor but not one that would invalidate the research conducted to answer the questions.

After doctrine was sufficiently analyzed two case studies were analyzed to determine if each major insurgent group, the PFLOAG and the Taliban, built combat power in ways similar to counterinsurgent forces, in this case specifically United States military forces. Both the PFLOAG and the Taliban built combat power in ways that met the U.S. Army's definition of each Element of Combat Power.



## Leadership

The PFLOAG generated combat power that met the definitions established in chapter 2. For Leadership, some the PFLOAG leaders had the advantage of being sent to Yemen, China, the Soviet Union, as well as in other communist countries for training. The professional military organizations of the external supporting countries provided training to the *adoo* on how to conduct operations as well as leadership. So, in some ways, the *adoo* were trained using current operational guidelines observed by major military powers of the 1960s and 1970s. But not all *adoo* were trained outside Oman. There is no way to determine which *adoo* did or did not receive training outside Oman. But, some *adoo* actions analyzed for this research project did not match conventional leadership doctrine. In the example of the meeting engagement the *adoo* continued to maneuver against the SAF/SAS patrol despite the fact that they had inferior fire power. Despite that fact, the *adoo* force attacked directly at the machine-gun and maneuvered against it. U.S. Army Field Manual 7-8, *The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad* says, “Frontal attack is a form of maneuver in which an attacking element seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force along a broad front.” The *adoo* patrol did conduct a frontal attack and clearly they were the weaker force. This seems to indicate that the *adoo* patrol leader did not have a similar type of doctrinal training. Few trained leaders attack uphill against an enemy with superior firepower. yet that same *adoo* leader developed his combat power in a way that did not violate the principles established in chapter 2.

The Taliban leadership demonstrates confidence and competence. There is a strong likelihood that incompetent Taliban leaders suffer from attrition. It is also likely

that Taliban leaders who are not adaptable and flexible become a number on a list of HVIs.<sup>1</sup> Thus, strong, capable leaders who can understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, and assess their operations enjoy success and, in turn, become the subject of articles in scholarly journals written by counterinsurgent leaders. The Taliban does have strong leaders capable of building combat power. Their longevity in combat validates this assertion as true.

In review of the doctrine of the Leadership Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Leadership Element of Combat Power.

#### Information

PFLOAG used information to assist their commanders in making decisions as well as to execute inform and influence operations. The examples of intimidation of locals by the *adoo* exist in all text reviewed for this research project. In short, the *adoo* understood how to access the information they required and used it to their advantage. The *adoo* did indeed use information to generate combat power.

The Taliban have a strong information capability. Their numerous sources in the GIROA military and police provide information that enable decision making by Taliban commanders. They use intimidation, fear, and violence to ensure a compliant attitude of the population. Their inform and influence operations use a mix of truth and fabrication to influence the situation at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. This supports the generation of combat power in support of Taliban operations.

In review of the doctrine of the Information Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Information Element of Combat Power.

### Movement and Maneuver

The *adoo* were masters of Movement and Maneuver. Growing up on the jebel, they learned as they grew how to move, when to move, where to move. They travelled light and moved fast. Over time the *adoo* became masters of the home turf and could estimate if counterinsurgent forces were moving into positions of vulnerability which they promptly exploited. The *adoo* understood the Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power and how to use it.

The Taliban are experts at Movement and Maneuver. They move fast, travel light, withdraw as counterinsurgent forces press too hard, rush back as counterinsurgents withdraw, and pursue when they observe vulnerabilities. They understand how to mix maneuver with fires. They generate combat power using Movement and Maneuver.

In review of the doctrine of the Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power.

### Intelligence

The *adoo* used Intelligence in many different ways. They used it to assist them in targeting GoO military forces. They used intelligence in mission planning with the Battle of Mirbat and the fire sac at Shershitti as examples. They used intelligence operations to

answer information priorities. And there is evidence that they used counter-intelligence to place sources in the SAF to provide information on counterinsurgency operations. The *adoo* understood their intelligence requirements and ably used it to build combat power.

The Taliban also effectively use their intelligence functions. They have many informants who provide information of pending operations against Taliban forces and operations. They have a well developed targeting process to determine targeting preferences. And Taliban counterintelligence operations routinely provide sources, agents, and access to targets. The Taliban understand how to build combat power through aggressive intelligence operations.

In review of the doctrine of the Intelligence Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Intelligence Element of Combat Power.

#### Fires

The *adoo* were experts at using fires in offense and defense. The *adoo* mortar-man understood how to use fires to harass the SAF and SAS. And the amount of fires, both direct and indirect, at the Battle of Mirbat in support of the maneuver force demonstrates that the *adoo* knew how to conduct combined arms operations and used them effectively. They definitely used Fires to build their combat power.

The Taliban use the Fires Element of Combat Power to in combination with Movement and Maneuver to gain a position of advantage over their enemies and place direct and indirect fires on them to create lethal effects. They use suicide bombers as precisions guided munitions. They use lethal targeting to conduct non-lethal targeting and

influence strategic counterinsurgency partners. The Taliban build combat power through Fires.

In review of the doctrine of the Fires Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Fires Element of Combat Power.

### Sustainment

In regards to Sustainment, the *adoo* created a very robust logistics system that supported their operations. From ammunition for the various weapons systems used by the *adoo* to food stuffs, the *adoo* logistics and transportation systems enabled their operations and generated combat power. Their personnel and medical service were very functional as well. Paying pensions to the widows of *adoo* killed in the war qualified as financial system support. The only doctrinal function not established in any of the texts was psychological support. Other than that one deficiency, the *adoo* generated a lot of combat power through effective and continuous logistics and personnel services.

The Taliban have sustained their operations for ten years. They are able to move the material support for their operations from bullets to rockets to explosives. They maintain enough supplies to sustain operations and provide Taliban commanders with freedom of action, extended operational reach, and prolonged endurance. They continue to produce willing fighters for their cause. The Taliban use Sustainment to generate combat power.

In review of the doctrine of the Sustainment Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Sustainment Element of Combat Power.

## Protection

Protection was something the *adoo* did in a manner very different than U.S. military doctrine. Jeapes described it very effectively, “The bravery of the *firqat* leaders . . . seemed based upon a mixture of fatalism and faith.”<sup>2</sup> To quote a former *adoo*, “A man can only die once.”<sup>3</sup> The anonymity of *adoo* fighters provided them protection from military personnel not from Dhofar and extended to secure their bases and smuggling routes.

The Taliban employ a system of protection very similar to the *adoo*’s fatalism and faith. As they share a common religious faith, it is not surprising. Anonymity affords the Taliban fighters security in the same manner as the *adoo* also.

In review of the doctrine of the Protection Element of Combat Power and the case studies and analysis of the PFLOAG and the Taliban, there is commonality in how insurgents and counterinsurgents develop the Protection Element of Combat Power.

## Combat Power

That the PFLOAG and Taliban generate combat power without violating the principles of U.S. Army doctrine demonstrates there is great similarity between how insurgents and counterinsurgents generate combat power. The PFLOAG were, and the Taliban are, capable of generating and maintaining combat power throughout an operation in order to achieve success. The PFLOAG fought from 1962 until 1976, almost 14 years. The Taliban fight is in its 11th year. If these two insurgent groups were not able to generate combat power and maintain it, their insurgencies would have failed soon after launching combat operations against counterinsurgent forces.

### Recommendations

The use of the Elements of Combat Power as a tool to analyze insurgents is useful. We understand the Elements of Combat Power and their implementation. Our understanding can facilitate how we examine the enemy in the IPB, and can then be disseminated in the products so developed. The value of IPB analysis of the way insurgents use the Elements of Combat Power, as we understand them, to generate their combat power is in the fact that it can be passed on for our own implementation, right down to the platoon and squad level. At the tactical level, counterinsurgent units can better understand their own strengths, vulnerabilities, and limitations as well as that of the insurgents. Hence the famous quote from Sun Tzu, “Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”<sup>4</sup>

#### Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment

Further study is required to see applicability of analyzing insurgent Elements of Combat Power as part of the IPOE process. Initial endeavors by the author to do so in Afghanistan and Colombia did not prove interesting for the consumers of the IPB products. When the insurgent is poorly defined it is possible that an in-depth analysis of their Elements of Combat Power may provide tactical and operational commanders the opportunity to initiate offensive operations without the fidelity of intelligence they would prefer. In analyzing an insurgent group’s Elements of Combat Power, analysts may define a different set of critical vulnerabilities than the traditional CoG analysis or the

newer concepts of Dr. Strange and Colonel Iron; or they may identify Critical Vulnerabilities earlier in the IPB process when little is known about the insurgents.

In conducting a Center of Gravity Analysis of an insurgent group, the identified methodology of using Elements of Combat Power could identify the insurgents themselves as the center of Gravity and the Elements of Combat Power are the Critical Capabilities. See figure 4 for an example of how a basic Center of Gravity construct might be conducted.

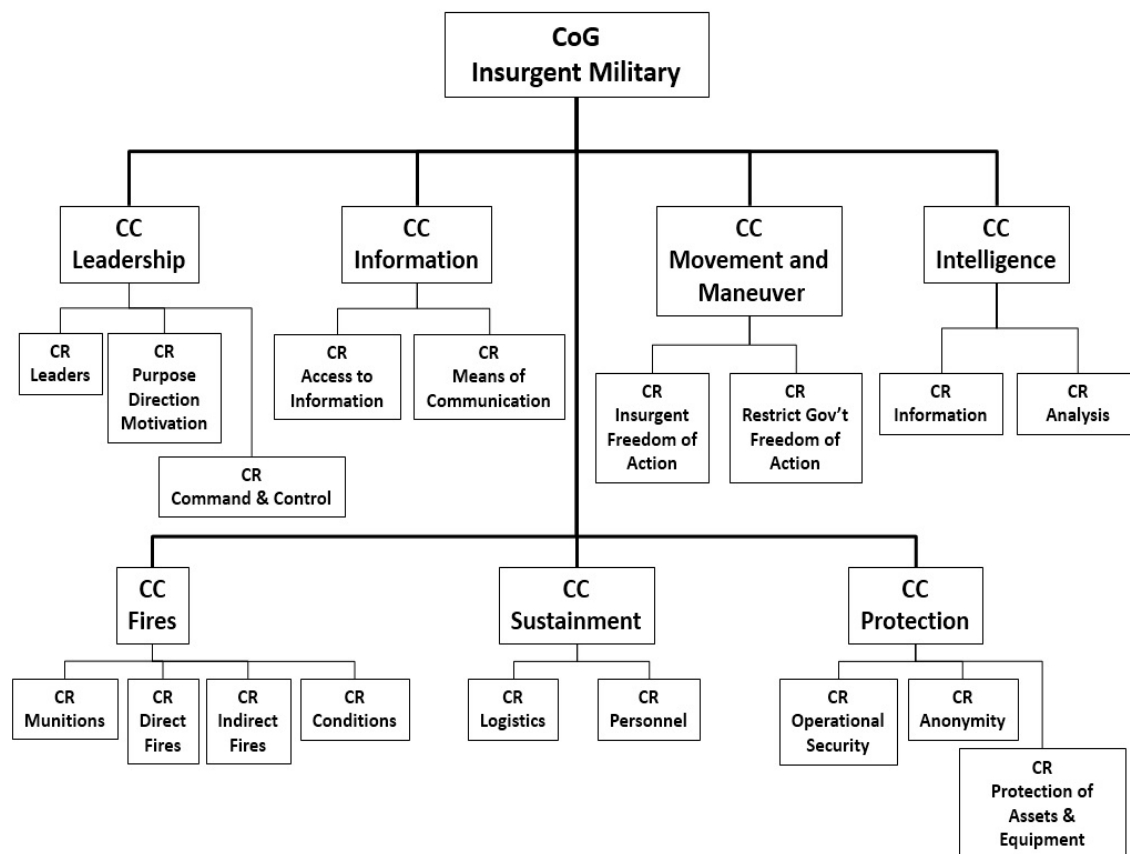


Figure 4. Elements of Combat Power as Critical Capabilities in a Center of Gravity Analysis

Source: Created by author.



## Leadership

For the Leadership Element of Combat Power, the Critical Requirements are trained leaders. The Critical Vulnerabilities could be how the leaders are trained and developed or the requirement for those leaders to remain overnight/day somewhere to eat, sleep, and conduct business (Command and Control). The SAF/firqat/SAS tried to target adoo leadership but were not effective at finding them.

In Afghanistan, vast resources are devoted to Finding and Fixing Taliban leadership. Dedicating Tier 1 units to the targeting effort demonstrates the level of importance assigned to the “Action” aspect of F2AEAD. But the intelligence work behind the targeting effort is much bigger. Huge amounts of resources are focused on finding and fixing the Taliban leadership. A new aspect of exploitation also took shape as a result of targeting Taliban leadership (and the insurgent leaders in Iraq). Tactical Site Exploitation is accomplished by teams with special cutting edge forensic equipment to exploit all evidence on site after Tier 1 units complete the “Action”. The goal is to exploit everything possible on a site, identify secondary and tertiary targets based upon findings, and execute those targets immediately afterwards, the same day or night. CoG analysis properly identified the Taliban Leadership requirement to remain at a location over night/day as a vulnerability of the Critical Requirement of exercising Command and Control.

## Movement and Maneuver

The Movement and Maneuver Element of Combat Power is an essential insurgent Critical Capability. A Critical Requirement could be insurgent Freedom of Action, with a Critical Vulnerability being the movement of logistics from one area to another,

movement of personnel to and from safe havens (outside the area of operations or to locations where insurgents have the support of the populace), presence patrols to maintain control of the population (all tasks for which insurgents require freedom of movement). If the counterinsurgent forces decentralize their units to enable one echelon above the maneuver element of the insurgents (if the insurgents maneuver as squads, the counterinsurgents move as platoons), they can dominate when there is chance contact or a meeting engagement and still move quick enough to chase down the insurgent elements. Doing so takes away the insurgent group's Freedom of Action. In Dhofar, the establishment of the Leopard Line, Hornbeam Line, and the Damavand Line established control of terrain that prevented adoo Freedom of Action. Freedom of Action to move logistics might have been a Critical Requirement for the adoo. The logistic camel caravan may have been a Critical Vulnerability.

An example of effective counterinsurgent shaping operations might be emplacement of mutually supporting Strong Point defensive positions with sufficient weapons systems (fires) and dismounted patrols (movement and maneuver) along natural, existing lines of communications that insurgents use to conduct clandestine logistic operations. Counterinsurgents could use ISR systems to: observe insurgent activities over time; determine patterns of life to identify logistic centers/hubs inside the operational area, outside, or even those in neighboring countries that provide direct or indirect support to the insurgents. Once identified, counterinsurgents might use outposts to restrict insurgent movement or conduct decisive operations to destroy those locations which provide logistical support to the insurgents. This is, in essence, what the SAF/firqat/SAS did in Dhofar to neutralize the adoo Critical Requirement of Freedom of Action.

## Sustainment

In regards to the Critical Capability of Sustainment, a Critical Requirement could be Personnel Services, specifically recruiting. A Critical Vulnerability could be that the adoo were pushed to focus on being communist and to ignore their religion, Islam. The SAS used Information Operations to effectively target this vulnerability with themes which appealed to the Dhofari cultural norms, tribal affiliations, and family unity. An early indicator of the success of this activity was the SAS/BATT implementation of the first firqat, Firqat Salahideen. It failed because Salim Mubarak did not follow tribal affiliations and assumed he could control the various tribal affiliations as he had when he was adoo. This seems to validate that the tribes themselves, when given the option, preferred their own tribal affiliations and not the irreligious one of the PFLOAG.

The Taliban use similar appeal following the Pashtunwali. While the GIROA push a homogenized ANA and ANP, the Taliban focus seems to use two approaches. Villages have their own local Taliban and some locations have Taliban that come from others areas and operate independently, some employing foreign fighters. Using a segregated approach appeals to the individual nature of the Afghan culture: family, clan, and then tribe. They capitalize on the lack of unity and trust within the ANA and ANP at the local level, seeding distrust of the GIROA. In analyzing the Critical Requirement of personnel, counterinsurgent forces could focus on determining who has influence over the military aged males. Using information operations and non-lethal targeting over time against those elements or people with influence over the military aged males might eventually have negative impacts against the Taliban recruiting efforts.

## Elements of Combat Power Implemented in Shaping and Decisive Operations

Additional study is required to determine how to effectively neutralize an insurgent group's Elements of Combat Power during the planning phase of shaping and decisive operations. If key aspects of insurgent Elements of Combat Power can be neutralized during battle, insurgents may not have enough flexibility to react. For instance, if insurgent Command and Control systems can be neutralized or degraded during battle, the insurgents likely do not have much redundancy built into their capabilities to react fast enough to prevent their forces from being overwhelmed. Or if an insurgent leader who usually plans and conducts squad-sized elements can be coaxed into battle as the leader of a company or battalion-sized unit of insurgents, it is likely that leader does not have the requisite trained staff nor personal development to manage such an undertaking. Another example could be neutralizing insurgent Information systems to flood them with a high volume of information, from various sources, with conflicting information, which could confuse the insurgents and delay their reaction to counterinsurgent operations.

## The Population as a Critical Requirement

More study and research is required to determine if the population can be considered a Critical Requirement to an insurgent group. Using the insurgents themselves as the Center of Gravity instead of the population, one could observe that the population is a Critical Requirement of five Elements of Combat Power: Information, certain aspects of Movement and Maneuver, Intelligence, Sustainment, and Protection. The impacts and effects of neutralizing five Elements of Combat Power of an insurgent group might

explain why turning the population against the insurgents has such detrimental impacts on insurgent operations.

### Elements of Insurgent Combat Power

It is possible that an insurgency has a different, distinct set of Elements of Combat Power that apply to the nature of how insurgency is conducted. For example, it is likely that external support is an Element of Combat Power for an insurgency. Much more study is required to determine if there is such a thing as Elements of Insurgent Combat Power.

### Asymmetric Warfare

Some readers and practitioners of counterinsurgency may consider that insurgency is a sub-set of asymmetric warfare. If that is true, then it may be possible to analyze asymmetric combatants using the same or similar processes outlined above. More study is required to determine if asymmetric warfare can be analyzed effectively via the Elements of Combat Power.

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<sup>1</sup>HVI—A high-value individual is a person of interest (friendly, adversary, or enemy) who must be identified, surveilled, tracked and influenced through the use of information or fires. A high-value individual may become a high-payoff target that must be acquired and successfully attacked (exploited, captured, or killed) for the success of the friendly commander's mission. US Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-19.

<sup>2</sup>Jeapes, 120.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Sun Tzu, *On War*, trans. by Lionel Giles (online version [www.artofwarsuntzu.com](http://www.artofwarsuntzu.com), original version from London: Luzac and Company, 1910), <http://www.artofwarsuntzu.com> (accessed 2 December 2012), 6. Great thanks to COL David Maxwell (ret) for walking me through this portion of the conclusion, just as he did the introduction.

## GLOSSARY

**After action review**—A guided analysis of an organization's performance, conducted at appropriate times during and at the conclusion of a training event or operation with the objective of improving future performance. It includes a facilitator, event participants, and other observers. Also called AAR.

**Ambush**—An attack by fire or other destructive means from concealed positions on a moving or temporarily halted enemy.

**Area of operations**—An operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and maritime forces that should be large enough to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. Also called AO.

**Area reconnaissance**—A form of reconnaissance that focuses on obtaining detailed information about the terrain or enemy activity within a prescribed area.

**Army Health System**—A component of the Military Health Systems that is responsible for operational management of the health service support and force health protection missions for training, predeployment (sic), deployment, and postdeployment (sic) operations.

**Art of tactics**—This consists of three interrelated aspects: the creative and flexible array of means to accomplish assigned missions, decisionmaking (sic) under conditions of uncertainty when faced with an intelligent enemy, and understanding the human dimension the effects of combat on Soldiers and Marines.

**Assault position**—A covered and concealed position short of the objective, from which final preparations are made to assault the objective.

**Assessment**—1. A continuous process that measures the overall effectiveness of employing joint force capabilities during military operations. 2. Determination of the progress toward accomplishing a task, creating a condition, or achieving an objective. 3. Analysis of the security, effectiveness, and potential of an existing or planned intelligence activity.

**Attack**—An offensive task that destroys or defeats enemy forces, seizes and secures terrain, or both.

**Attack position**—The last position an attacking force occupies or passes through before crossing the line of departure.

**Battle**—A battle consists of a set of related engagements that lasts longer and involves larger forces than an engagement.

**Battalion**—A unit consisting of two or more company-, battery-, or troop-sized units and a headquarters. Also called bn.

**Campaign**—A series of related major operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space.

**Center of gravity**—The source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act. Also called COG.

**Combat power**—The total means of destructive, constructive, and information capabilities that a military unit or formation can apply at a given time.

**Combined arms**—The synchronized and simultaneous application of arms to achieve an effect greater than if each arm was used separately or sequentially.

**Command**—1. The authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel. Also called CMD.

**Commander's intent**—A clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned.

**Company**—A company is a unit consisting of two or more platoons, usually of the same type, with a headquarters and a limited capacity for self-support.

**Concealment**—Protection from observation or surveillance.

**Constraint**—A restriction placed on the command by a higher command. A constraint dictates an action or inaction, thus restricting the freedom of action a subordinate commander.

**Counterintelligence**—Information gathered and activities conducted to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, or protect against espionage, other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations conducted for or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations or persons or their agents, or international terrorist organizations or activities. See FM 2-22.2. Counters or neutralizes intelligence collection efforts through collection, counterintelligence investigations, operations analysis, production, and technical services and support. Counterintelligence includes all actions taken to detect, identify, track, exploit, and neutralize the multidiscipline intelligence activities of friends, competitors, opponents, adversaries, and



- enemies; is the key intelligence community contributor to protect U.S. interests and equities; assists in identifying essential elements of friendly information, identifying vulnerabilities to threat collection, and actions taken to counter collection and operations against U.S. forces.
- Countermobility (sic) Operations—Those combined arms activities that use or enhance the effects of natural and man-made obstacles to deny an adversary freedom of movement and maneuver.
- Course of Action—A scheme developed to accomplish a mission.
- Cover—1. Protection from the effects of fires. (ADRP 1-02) 2. A security task to protect the main body by fighting to gain time while also observing and reporting information and preventing enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body.
- Culminating Point—That point in time and space at which a force no longer possesses the capability to continue its current form of operations.
- Decisive Action—The continuous, simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or defense support of civil authorities tasks.
- Decisive Engagement—An engagement in which a unit is considered fully committed and cannot maneuver or extricate itself. In the absence of outside assistance, the action must be fought to a conclusion and either won or lost with the forces at hand.
- Decisive Operation—The operation that directly accomplishes the mission.
- Defense Support of Civil Authorities—Support provided by U.S. Federal military forces, DoD [Department of Defense] civilians, DoD contract personnel, DoD Component assets, and National Guard forces (when the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Governors of the affected States, elects and requests to use those forces in title 32, U.S.C. [United States Code], status) in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities for domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, and other domestic activities, or from qualifying entities for special events.
- Defensive Task—A task conducted to defeat an enemy attack, gain time, economize forces, and develop conditions favorable for offensive or stability tasks.
- Enemy—A party identified as hostile against which the use of force is authorized.
- Engagement—1. In air defense, an attack with guns or air-to-air missiles by an interceptor aircraft, or the launch of an air defense missile by air defense artillery and the missile's subsequent travel to intercept. 2. A tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces.

Exploitation—An offensive task—usually following a successful attack—designed to disorganize the enemy in depth.

Financial Management—The sustainment of U.S. Army, joint, interagency, interdepartmental, and multinational operations through the execution of two mutually supporting core functions, resource management and finance operations. These two functions are comprised of the following core competencies: fund the force, banking and disbursing support, pay support, accounting support and cost management, financial management planning and operations, and management internal controls.

Fire and Movement—The concept of applying fires from all sources to suppress, neutralize, or destroy the enemy, and the tactical movement of combat forces in relation to the enemy (as components of maneuver, applicable at all echelons). At the squad level, it entails a team placing suppressive fire on the enemy as another team moves against or around the enemy.

Fire Superiority—That degree of dominance in the fires of one force over another that permits that force to conduct maneuver at a given time and place without prohibitive interference by the enemy.

Fires Warfighting Function—The related tasks and systems that provide collective and coordinated use of Army indirect fires, air and missile defense, and joint fires through the targeting process.

Fix—A tactical mission task where a commander prevents the enemy from moving any part of his force from a specific location for a specific period. Fix is also an obstacle effect that focuses fire planning and obstacle effort to slow an attacker's movement within a specified area, normally an engagement area.

Forms of Maneuver—Distinct tactical combinations of fire and movement with a unique set of doctrinal characteristics that differ primarily in the relationship between the maneuvering force and the enemy.

Frontal Attack—A form of maneuver in which the attacking force seeks to destroy a weaker enemy force or fix a larger enemy force in place over a broad front.

Hasty Operation—An operation in which a commander directs his immediately available forces, using fragmentary orders to perform activities with minimal preparation, trading planning and preparation time for speed of execution.

High-Value Individual—A high-value individual is a person of interest (friendly, adversary, or enemy) who must be identified, surveilled, tracked and influenced through the use of information or fires. A high-value individual may become a high-payoff target that must be acquired and successfully attacked (exploited, captured, or killed) for the success of the friendly commander's mission.

**Human Intelligence**—The collection by a trained human intelligence collector of foreign information from people and multimedia to identify elements, intentions, composition, strength, dispositions, tactics, equipment, and capabilities. Also called HUMINT.

**Indicator**—In intelligence usage, an item of information which reflects the intention or capability of an adversary to adopt or reject a course of action. See ADRP 2-0. In the context of assessment, an Item of information that provides insight into a measure of effectiveness or measure of performance.

**Infiltration**—A form of maneuver in which an attacking force conducts undetected movement through or into an area occupied by enemy forces to occupy a position of advantage in the enemy rear while exposing only small elements to enemy defensive fires.

**Inform and Influence Activities**—The integration of designated information-related capabilities in order to synchronize themes, messages and actions with operations to inform United States and global audiences, influence foreign audiences, and affect adversary and enemy decisionmaking (sic).

**Information**—The meaning that a human assigns to data by means of the known conventions used in their representation.

**Information Requirement**—In intelligence usage, those items of information regarding the adversary and other relevant aspects of the operational environment that need to be collected and processed in order to meet the intelligence requirements of a commander. See ADRP 2-0. Any information elements the commander and staff require to successfully conduct operations.

**Intelligence**—The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations. The term is also applied to the activity which results in the product and to the organizations engaged in such activity.

**Intelligence Analysis**—The process by which collected information is evaluated and integrated with existing information to facilitate intelligence production.

**Intelligence Operations**—The tasks and actions undertaken by military intelligence organizations and Soldiers to obtain information to satisfy validated requirements.

**Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield**—A systematic process of analyzing and visualizing the portions of the mission variables of threat, terrain, weather, and civil considerations in a specific area of interest and for a specific mission. By applying intelligence preparation of the battlefield commanders gain the information necessary to selectively apply and maximize operational effectiveness at critical points in time and space. Also called IPB.

**Intelligence Requirement**—A type of information requirement developed by subordinate commanders and the staff (including subordinate staffs) that requires dedicated information collection for the elements of threat, terrain and weather, and civil considerations.

**Intelligence Warfighting Function**—The related tasks and systems that facilitate understanding the enemy, terrain, and civil considerations.

**Isolate**—A tactical mission task that requires a unit to seal off—both physically and psychologically—an enemy from his sources of support, deny an enemy freedom of movement, and prevent an enemy unit from having contact with other enemy forces.

**Law of War**—Also called the law of armed conflict - is that part of international law that regulates the conduct of armed hostilities.

**Leadership**—The process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.

**Line of Operations**—A line that defines the directional orientation of a force in time and space in relation to the enemy and links the force with its base of operations and objectives.

**Logistics**—Planning and executing the movement and support of forces. It includes those aspects of military operations that deal with: design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation and disposition of materiel, acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities, and acquisition or furnishing of services.

**Maneuver**—1. A movement to place ships, aircraft, or land forces in a position of advantage over the enemy. 2. A tactical exercise carried out at sea, in the air, on the ground, or on a map in imitation of war. 3. The operation of a ship, aircraft, or vehicle, to cause it to perform desired movements. 4. Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy.

**Meeting Engagement**—A combat action that occurs when a moving force, incompletely deployed for battle, engages an enemy at an unexpected time and place.

**Military Deception**—Actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers as to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission. Also called MILDEC.

**Mission**—1. The task, together with the purpose, that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason therefore.

**Mission Command Warfighting Function**—The related tasks and systems that develops and integrate those activities enabling a commander to balance the art of command and the science of control in order to integrate the other warfighting functions.

**Mobility Operations**—Obstacle reduction by maneuver and engineer units to reduce or negate the effects of existing or reinforcing obstacles. The objective is to maintain freedom of movement for maneuver units, weapon systems, and critical supplies. (ADRP 3-90) Those combined arms activities that mitigate the effects of natural and manmade obstacles to enable freedom of movement and maneuver.

**Movement and Maneuver Warfighting Function**—The related tasks and systems that move and employ forces to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy and other threats.

**Objective**—The clearly defined, decisive, and attainable goal toward which every operation is directed. See ADRP 5-0. A location on the ground used to orient operations, phase operations, facilitate changes of direction, and provide for unity of effort. Also called OBJ.

**Observation**—The condition of weather and terrain that permits a force to see the friendly, enemy, and neutral personnel and systems, and key aspects of the environment.

**Observation Post**—A position from which military observations are made, or fire directed and adjusted, and which possesses appropriate communications. While aerial observers and sensors systems are extremely useful, those systems do not constitute aerial observation posts. Also called OP.

**Occupy**—A tactical mission task that involves a force moving a friendly force into an area so that it can control that area. Both the force's movement to and occupation of the area occur without enemy opposition.

**Offensive Fires**—Fires that preempt enemy actions.

**Offensive Tasks**—Tasks conducted to defeat and destroy enemy forces and seize terrain, resources, and population centers.

**Operational Environment**—A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. Also called OE.

**Other Governmental Agency**—Within the context of interagency coordination, a non Department of Defense agency of the United States Government.

**Penetration**—A form of maneuver in which an attacking force seeks to rupture enemy defenses on a narrow front to disrupt the defensive system.

Personnel Services—Sustainment functions that man and fund the force, maintain Soldier and family readiness, promote the moral and ethical values of the nation, and enable the fighting qualities of the Army.

Precision Munition—A munition that corrects for ballistic conditions using guidance and control up to the aimpoint (sic) or submunitions dispense with terminal accuracy less than the lethal radius of effects.

Protection—The preservation of the effectiveness and survivability of mission-related military and nonmilitary personnel, equipment, facilities, information, and infrastructure deployed or located within or outside the boundaries of a given operational area.

Protection Warfighting Function—The related tasks and systems that preserve the force so the commander can apply maximum combat power to accomplish the mission.

Pursuit—An offensive operation designed to catch or cut off a hostile force attempting to escape, with the aim of destroying it.

Raid—An operation to temporarily seize an area in order to secure information, confuse an adversary, capture personnel or equipment, or to destroy a capability culminating with a planned withdrawal.

Risk—Probability and severity of loss linked to hazards.

Rules of Engagement—Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered.

Science of Tactics—Encompasses the understanding of those military aspects of tactics—capabilities, techniques and procedures—that can be measured and codified.

Seize—A tactical mission task that involves taking possession of a designated area using overwhelming force.

Surveillance—The systematic observation of aerospace, surface or subsurface areas, places, persons, or things by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other means.

Sustainment—The provision of logistics, personnel services, and health service support necessary to maintain operations until successful mission completion.

Sustainment Warfighting Function—The related tasks and systems that provide support and services to ensure freedom of action, extend operational reach, and prolong endurance.

**Synchronization**—The arrangement of military actions in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at a decisive place and time.

**Target**—1. An entity or object considered for possible engagement or other action. 2. In intelligence usage, a country, area, installation, agency, or person against which intelligence operations are directed. 3. An area designated and numbered for future firing. 4. In gunfire support usage, an impact burst that hits the target.

**Targeting**—The process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.

**Tempo**—The relative speed and rhythm of military operations over time with respect to the enemy.

**Threat**—Any combination of actors, entities, or forces that have the capability and intent to harm United States forces, United States national interests, or the homeland.

**Transportation**—A logistics function: the movement of units, personnel, equipment, and supplies to support the concept of operations. Transportation incorporates military, commercial, and multinational assets. Transportation includes motor, rail, air, and water modes. Transportation nodes include motor, rail, air, and water terminal operations. Transportation also includes movement control and associated activities.

**Warfighting Function**—A group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes), united by a common purpose, that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives.

**Withdrawal Operation**—A planned retrograde operation in which a force in contact disengages from an enemy force and moves in a direction away from the enemy.

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